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MAY 22, 2000

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FOR 55 YEARS that sign had been nailed to the old fence. Because the junk yard was right in the center of town, Mr. Purvis tried to keep the place as neat as a junk yard can be. If all a person needed was a clutch for a broken down washing machine, Mr. Purvis would scratch his head and move slowly through the lot, even though he knew exactly where to find it. The trick was to give customers plenty of time to browse through the piles. That way they left with things they hadn't even known they needed: a busted window fan, a claw-footed bath tub, dented tin pails. It was an art, Mr. Purvis thought, to take what one person didn't want and match it up with someone who did.

But as the years passed, time was money and people couldn't afford to spend much of either tinkering with balky lawnmowers or sludgy oil burners. Sales

"Useless! Useless, senseless junk!"

Downtown Beautification Committee. They declared the old man's property a public hazard. It wasn't a valid business, but an eyesore. It gave people a poor impression of the town. Even his peeling sign made no sense. Of the original lettering, only one word was left: ABSOLUT.

With the committee gone, Mr. Purvis roamed dazedly through the lot. "Useless! Useless, senseless junk," he muttered, dragging pipes and storm window frames and sinks into a heap to clear the edges of his property. To keep the rickety pile from shifting, Mr. Purvis lashed it

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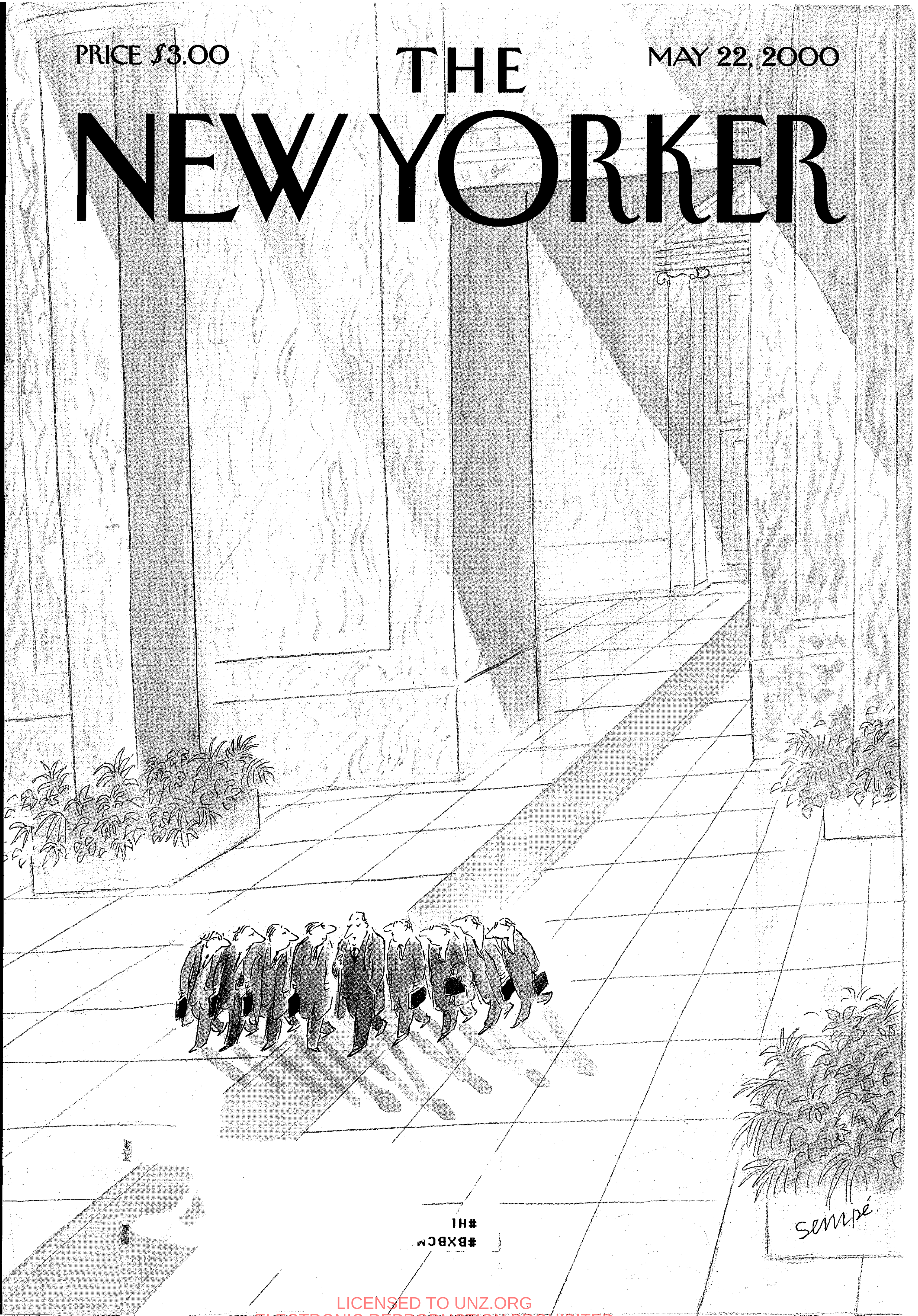
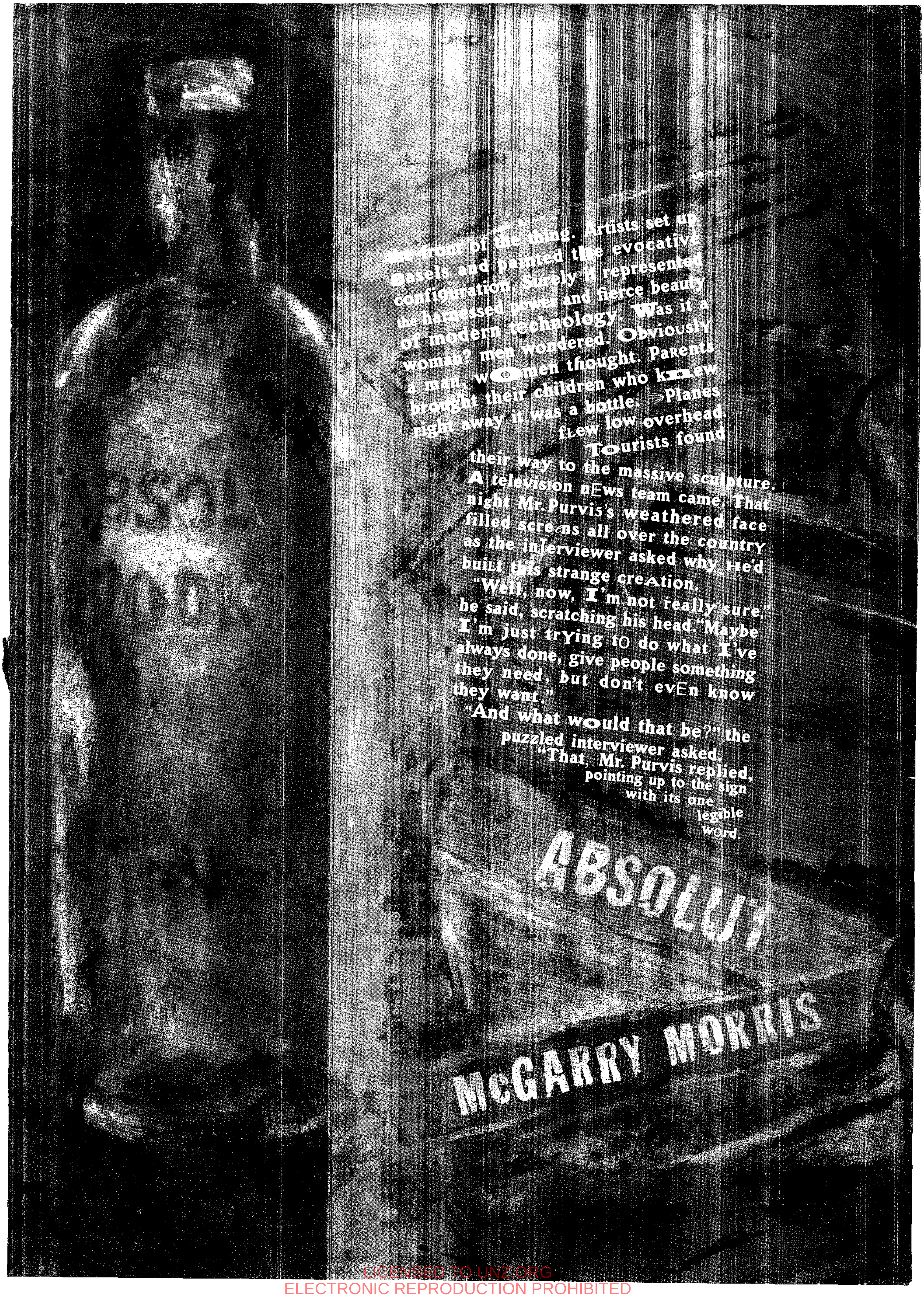


FOR 55 YEARS that sign had been nailed to the old fence. Because the junk yard was right in the center of town, Mr. Purvis tried to keep the place as neat as a junk yard can be. If all a person needed was a clutch for a broken down washing machine, Mr. Purvis would scratch his head and move slowly through the lot, even though he knew exactly where to find it. The trick was to give customers plenty of time to browse through the piles. That way they left with things they hadn't even known they needed: a busted window fan, a claw-footed bath tub, dented tin pails. It was an art, Mr. Purvis thought, to take what one person didn't want and match it up with someone who did.

"UsEless! UseLess, senSeless junk,"*

But as the years passed, time was money and people couldn't afford to spend much of either tinkering with balky lawnmowers or sludgy oil burners. Sales dwindled, but Mr. Purvis continued to haul in junk. His rusting piles grew higher and wider. Sometimes now, a week went by without a single sale. Sometimes, two weeks. Under the weight of so much junk, the decrepit fence sagged out over the sidewalk. The sign fell into the weeds, and a passerby propped it against the fence. One day Mr. Purvis's spirits soared as a crowd bustled through the gate. They were from the Downtown Beautification Committee. They declared the old man's property a public hazard. It wasn't a valid business, but an eyesore. It gave people a poor impression of the town. Even his peeling sign made no sense. Of the original lettering, only one word was left: ABSOLUT.

With the committee gone, Mr. Purvis roamed dazedly through the lot. "Useless! Useless, senseless junk," he muttered, dragging pipes and storm window frames and sinks into a heap to clear the edges of his property. To keep the rickety pile from shifting, Mr. Purvis lashed it all together with metal wire. Its silvery glow in the sunlight could be seen for miles around. At first he worked from ladders, then from staging. The last piece in place was a thirty-foot length of aluminum pipe. That made the towering conglomeration the tallest structure in town. People were mystified. They slowed way down as they drove by. The newspaper ran a picture of Mr. Purvis hoisting his sign on to



the front of the thing. Artists set up easels and painted the evocative configuration. Surely it represented the harnessed power and fierce beauty of modern technology. Was it a woman? men wondered. Obviously a man, women thought. Parents brought their children who knew right away it was a bottle. Planes flew low overhead. Tourists found their way to the massive sculpture. A television news team came. That night Mr. Purvis's weathered face filled screens all over the country as the interviewer asked why he'd built this strange creation.

"Well, now, I'm not really sure," he said, scratching his head. "Maybe I'm just trying to do what I've always done, give people something they need, but don't even know they want."

"And what would that be?" the puzzled interviewer asked.

"That, Mr. Purvis replied, pointing up to the sign with its one legible word.

Alice
Hoffman

LOCAL GIRLS

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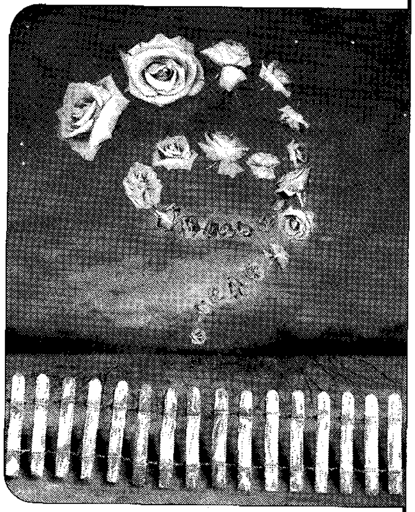

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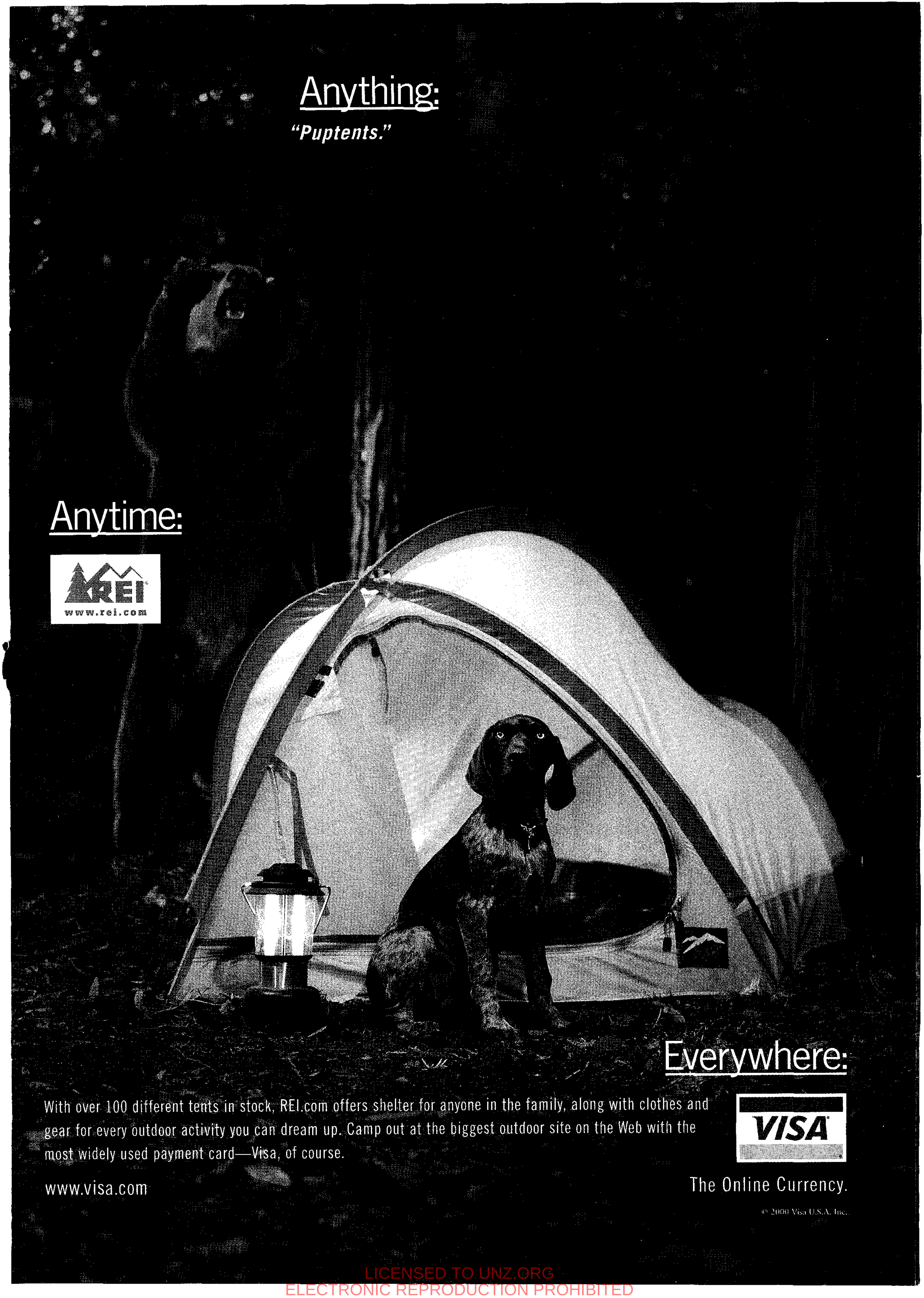
DRAWINGS *Danny Shanahan, Mick Stevens, Alex Gregory, J. C. Duffy, Roz Chast, Barbara Smaller, Jack Ziegler, P. C. Vey, Leo Cullum, Victoria Roberts, Bruce Eric Kaplan, Robert Weber, Gahan Wilson, John Caldwell, David Sipress, Michael Crawford, William Haefeli, Arnie Levin, Frank Cotham, Donald Reilly, Michael Maslin*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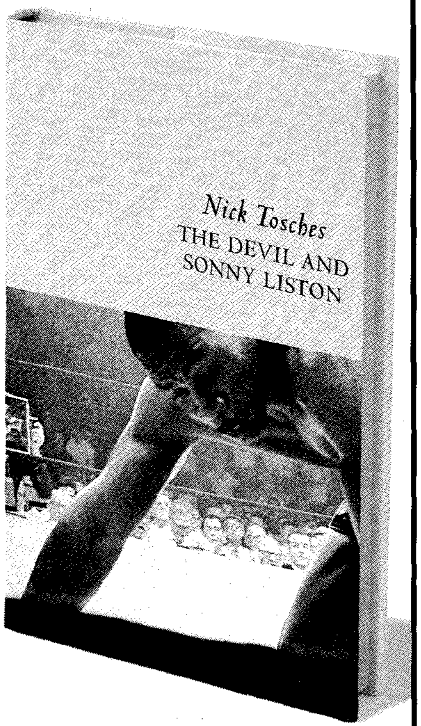
—MARK KRIEGEL, *DAILY NEWS*



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Dino, Trinities, and *The Nick Tosches Reader*

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Paul Goldberger ("The Sky Line," p. 88) writes about architecture for the magazine and is working on a book about the experience of looking at architecture.

J. J. Sempé (Cover; Sketchbook, p. 83) has painted sixty-seven covers for the magazine since his début, in August, 1978.

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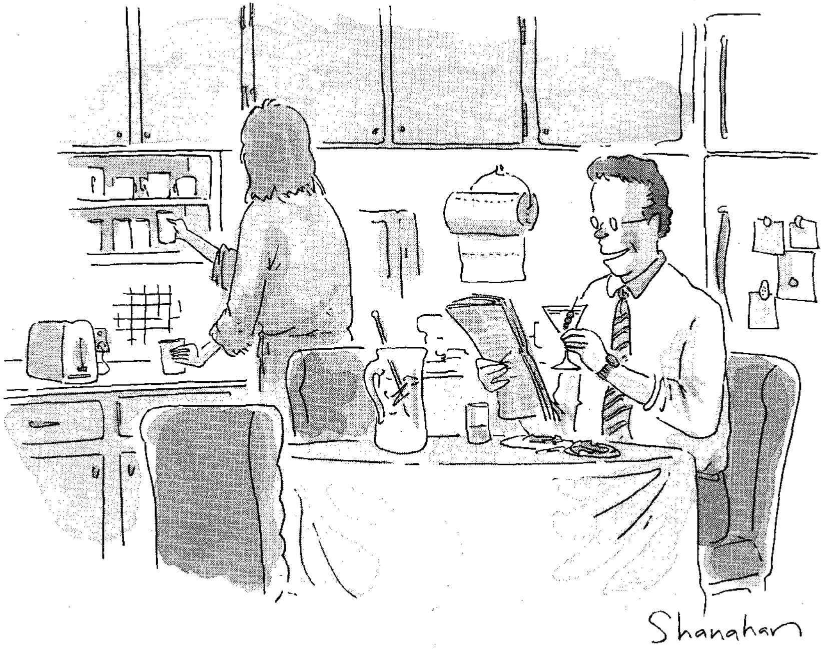
William Steig (The Back Page) has contributed humorous drawings since 1930. His work was the subject of a book by Lee Lorenz, "The World of William Steig," which was published in 1998. ♦



"Great coffee, honey!"

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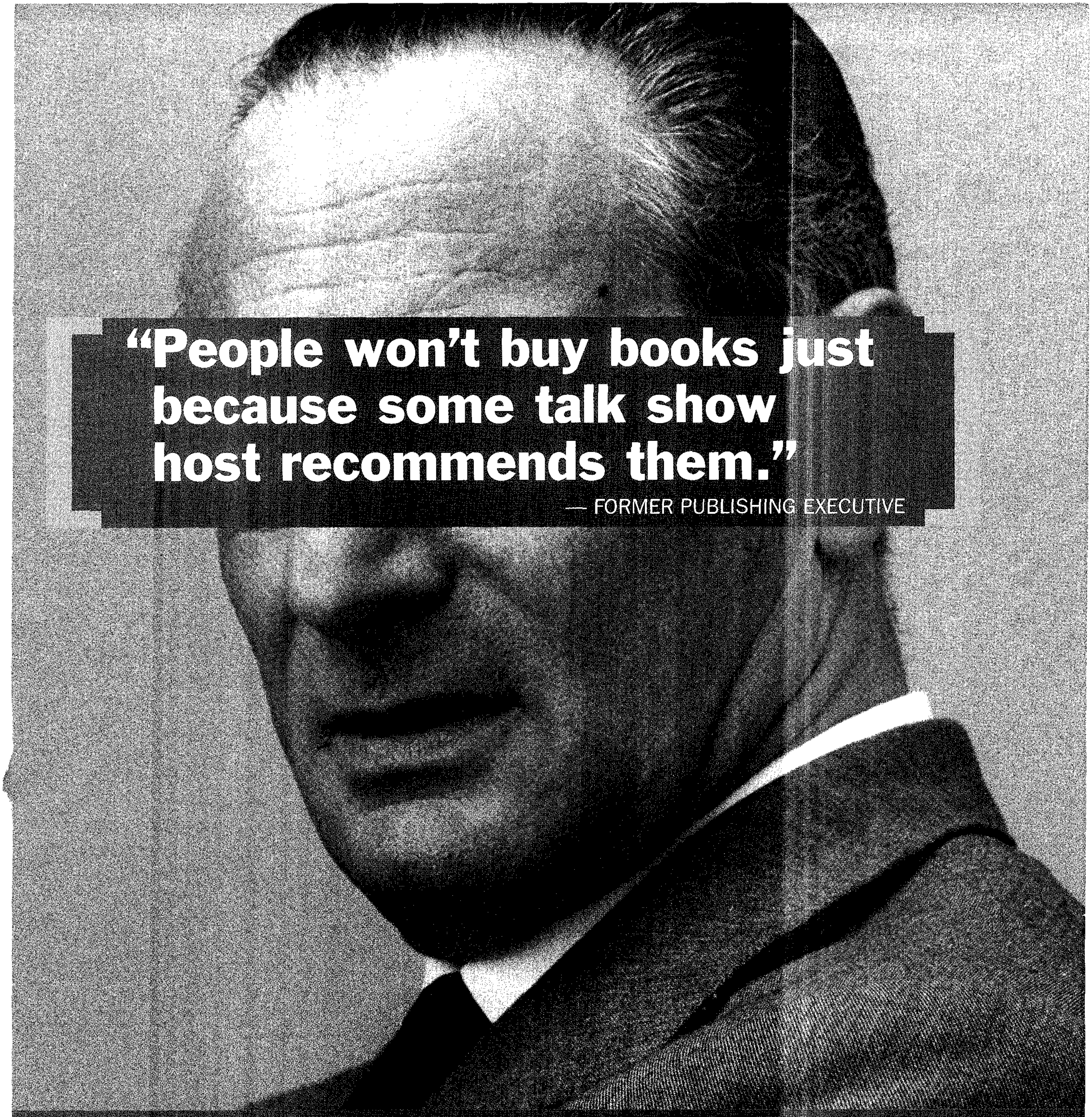
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TALK TO THE TALIBAN

William T. Vollmann's report from Afghanistan, "Across the Divide" (May 15th), demonstrates that engagement, not sanctions and pariahdom, is the way to undermine totalitarianism. The downfall of Soviet Communism began when Khrushchev initiated the process of rejoining the rest of the world. Exchanges of academics and artists, together with Western radio broadcasts in the languages of the Soviet Union and the growth of trade, helped wear away the carapace of fanaticism and obscurantism behind which Lenin and Stalin had tried to immure the populations they controlled. American policy today fortifies the control of the Taliban in Afghanistan and of Castro in Cuba. Clinton has chosen not to notice this. Neither Bush nor Gore gives promise of having the moral fibre to change his policies.

R. T. Davies
Silver Spring, Md.

NO STRINGS ATTACHED

I was surprised to read Tom Krens's characterization of the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art as an unbranded "part of the Guggenheim" ("The Museum Game," by Martin Filler, April 17th). Tom, who is a friend, deserves credit for the initial concept for MASS MoCA, but our funding, facilities, and programs are all generated by our own staff and board. We are an independent institution with no formal legal or financial relationship with the Guggenheim; it has been a supporter and a major lender to one of our thirteen exhibitions to date. Many other cultural institutions, collectors, and artists also provide vital program support. I might also point out that MASS MoCA has evolved rather dramatically from Tom's initial idea, of a static depot for large-scale sculpture from the nineteen-sixties and seventies. We feature an ambitious performing-arts program, unique fabrication capabilities, and a wide array of exhibition and rehearsal venues for developing new work, which together make MASS MoCA one of the country's largest and most integrated multidisciplinary platforms for visual, performing, and media arts. We're an open shop, and we still have room to grow.

Joseph Thompson
Director, MASS MoCA
North Adams, Mass.

WINDOWS AND THE WORLD

James Surowiecki (The Financial Page, April 17th) conveniently limits discussion of the case against Bill Gates to Netscape's browser and whether it was a threat to the Windows operating system, which, though it was central to the Justice Department's case, is a sideshow at best. The central issue is that Microsoft exerted monopolistic pressures on the free market with Windows. This might be moot were it not for the fact that Windows is an egregiously substandard and notoriously unreliable product, one that computer users have been double- and triple-billed for, in the form of "upgrades"—only marginal improvements on earlier versions. If this isn't a criminally predatory practice, then perhaps it is time for Congress to repeal the Sherman Antitrust Act.

Wm. B. Fankboner
La Quinta, Calif.

Computer viruses and worms, like biological epidemics, act upon specific systems. Just as the potato blight infected acres of identically planted fields, the recent "love bug" could only multiply in Microsoft-based E-mail programs. The damage it did demonstrated the risk posed by lack of "biodiversity" in our electronic ecosystem. The very dominance of a single system, independent of its strengths and weaknesses, can lead to disaster.

Martin F. Sohnius
Judith J. Perry
Cambridge, England

•

Letters should be sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number to "The Mail," The New Yorker, 4 Times Square, New York, N.Y. 10036. They can also be faxed to 212-286-5047 or sent via E-mail to themail@newyorker.com. Letters may be edited for length and clarity, and may be published in any medium; we regret that owing to the volume of correspondence we cannot reply to every letter.

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE
OPENINGS & PREVIEWS

Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.

CURRENT EVENTS
A liberal California senatorial candidate returns to his Connecticut home, in a new drama by the actor and playwright David Marshall Grant ("Snakebit"). Previews begin May 23. (Manhattan Theatre Club, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

ENSEMBLE STUDIO THEATRE
Series B in this year's six-week marathon of one-acts begins May 17 at 7:30, with plays by Edward Allan Baker, David Ives, Peter Maloney, and Stuart Spencer. The marathon continues through June 11. (549 W. 52nd St. 247-4982.)

ENTER THE GUARDSMAN
A musical romance based on Ferenc Molnar's "The Guardsman," starring Robert Cuccioli, Marla Schaffel, and Mark Jacoby. In previews through May 20. Opens May 21 at 2. (Vineyard Theatre, 108 E. 15th St. 239-6200.)

THE GINGER MAN
J. P. Donleavy's stage adaptation of his 1955 novel, staged by Ireland's Dublin Theatre Company. In previews. (Irish Arts Center, 553 W. 51st St. 581-4125.)

HOTEL SUITE
Helen Carey, Randy Graff, Leigh Lawson, and Ron Orbach star in an evening of one-acts taken from Neil Simon's three "Suite" plays. John Tillinger is the director. Previews begin May 19. (Gramercy Theatre, 127 E. 23rd St. 307-4100.)

THE LARAMIE PROJECT
A drama about the murder of gay-hate victim Matthew Shepard, written and directed by Moisés Kaufman ("Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde"). Preview on May 17. Opens May 18 at 6:30. (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 307-4100.)

LOUISE BOURGEOIS: I DO, I UNDO, I REDO
A stage portrait of the sculptor, written and performed by the Brazilian actress Denise Stoklos, who drew her text solely from the artist's words. Ms. Bourgeois designed the set. May 18-20 at 8 and May 21 at 3:30 and 8. Continues through May 28. (La Mama, 74A E. 4th St. 475-7710.)

THE PICTURE
Tony Torn stars in a new translation of Ionesco's play, staged by the Sanctuary Theatre Workshop. Previews begin May 17. (Chashama@111, at 111 W. 42nd St. 206-7188.)

PROOF
Mary-Louise Parker stars in a drama by David Auburn, about an enigmatic woman, her genius father, and a mysterious math proof. In previews through May 21. Opens May 23 at 6:45. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			17	18	19	20
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OPENED RECENTLY

ABIE'S ISLAND ROSE
The Jewish Repertory Theatre presents a musical comedy about a romance between a Jewish med student from New York and an Afro-Caribbean nurse. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000.)

ACHE
A hundred and thirty-nine explicit, post-breakup poems by the novelist Blake Nelson, adapted for the stage by the Bat Theatre Company and performed by Mr. Nelson. (The Flea, 41 White St., between Broadway and Church St. 226-0051.)

AIDA
Disney's new musical—five years in the making and a product of Pharaonic expense—is, if not perfect, a lively, polished entertainment with bursts of joyful flamboyance worthy of its composer, Elton John. The two female leads—Heather Headley, as Aida, and Sherie René Scott, as Amneris—shine in their different ways, and Bob Crowley's brilliant sets give the show both visual dazzle and emotional resonance. Also with Adam Pascal, as Radames, who, looking like a Harlequin-romance cover model and sounding a little like Michael Bolton, doesn't quite pack the punch that his two co-stars do. Directed by Robert Falls. (Reviewed in our issue of 4/10/00.) (Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4747.)

AMADEUS
From London, a revival of Peter Shaffer's drama, starring Michael Sheen as Mozart and David Suchet as Salieri. Sir Peter Hall is the director. (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

AMERICAN BUFFALO
In the Atlantic Theatre Company's lucid but uninspired staging of David Mamet's great 1975 play, the actors' chemistry never quite fills out the humiliated hearts of their characters—a junk-shop owner named Don (Philip Baker Hall), his young junkie gofer (the poignant, baby-faced Mark Webber), and Teach (the expert William H. Macy), a petty criminal who kisses himself in on a scam to steal back a nickel for which some dealer has paid Don ninety dollars. Still, Mamet's play is some kind of theatrical miracle. (3/27/00) (336 W. 20th St. 239-6200. Closes May 21.)

THE BOMB-ITTY OF ERRORS
In this exuberant take on "The Comedy of Errors," the action has been shifted to a hip-hop realm, and the basic ideas remain the same, but the four extravagantly talented writer-actors (who play all of the parts) make it seem altogether new. (45 Bleecker, 45 Bleecker St., at Lafayette St. 307-4100.)

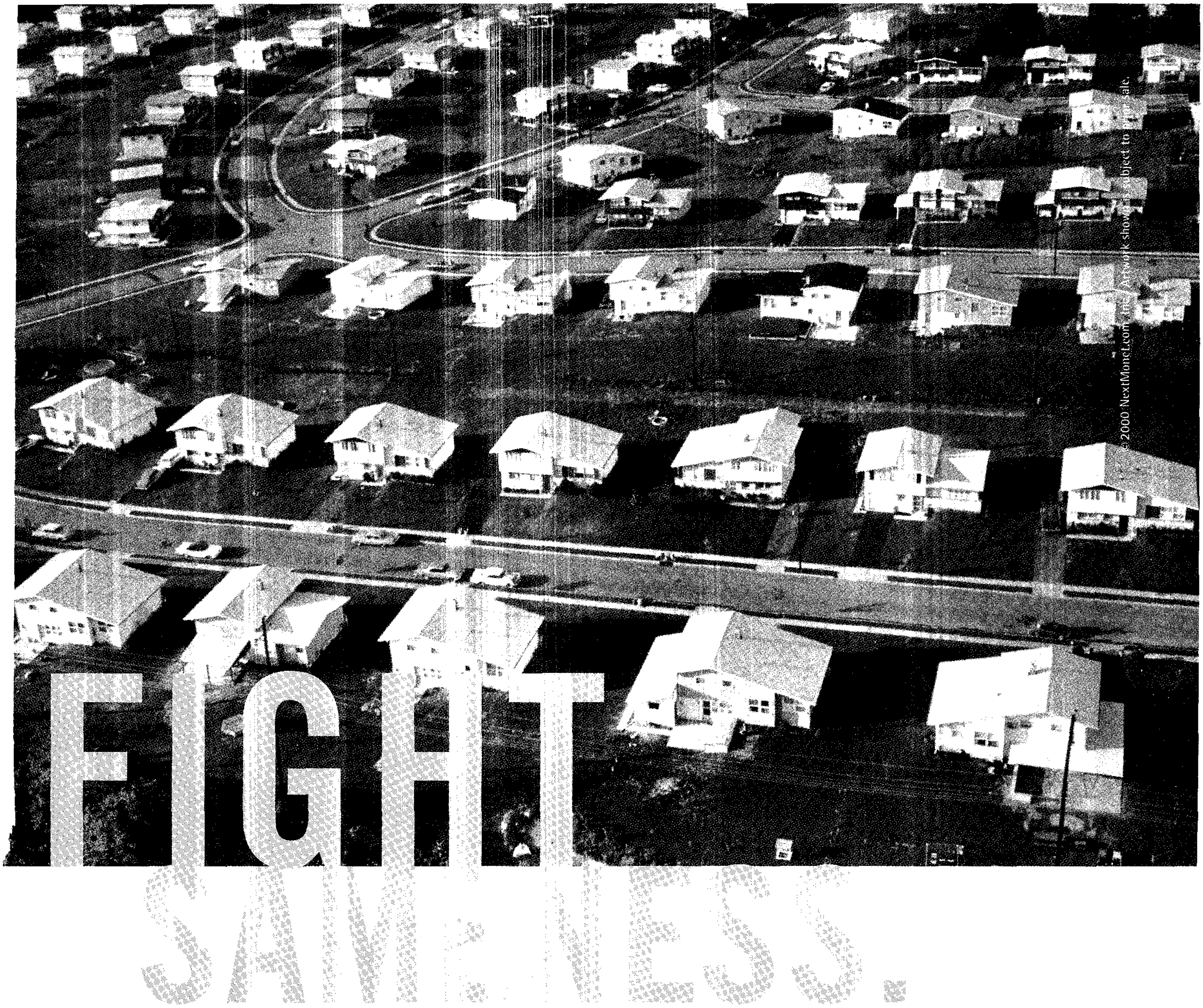
COBB
In his brilliantly constructed play about baseball's greatest hitter and most brutal schoolyard bully, Lee Blessing places three actors (Michael Cullen, Matt Mabe, and Michael Sabatino) onstage together to portray Tyrus Raymond Cobb, who reminisces from the afterlife and interacts with himself at various stages in his professional and personal life. For Cobb, baseball was a place to stake kingship, but here he's haunted by a forgotten legend, Negro Leaguer and Hall of Famer Oscar Charleston, who forces him to confront the social injustices he sheepishly dodged during his lifetime, denying himself, as well as the nation, a chance at true greatness. Clark Jackson releases a triumphant monologue as the embittered yet dignified Charleston. (Melting Pot Theatre, 311 W. 43rd St. 279-4200. Closes May 20.)

CONTACT
The director and choreographer Susan Stroman's dance play, a triptych of simple stories about the various forms of human connection and the atmosphere of longing, is a big-hearted, witty crowd-pleaser. (10/18-25/99) (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

COPENHAGEN
Michael Frayn's drama, which was inspired by a meeting in 1941 between the German physicist Werner Heisenberg and his Danish counterpart Niels Bohr. Michael Blakemore is the director. (4/24 & 5/1/00) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

THE DESIGNATED MOURNER
Wallace Shawn, Deborah Eisenberg, and Larry Pine make up the cast in Mr. Shawn's 1996 play, directed by André Gregory. (5/15/00) (21 South William Street. 532-8887.)

THE DIRECTOR
The playwright Nancy Hasty asks whether acting (which is essentially lying) can reveal deeper truth. It's a smart play, and, though it's not entirely satisfying intellectually, John Shea's brilliant performance as the director almost makes it seem so. (Arclight, 152 W. 71st St. 279-4200.)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DIRTY BLONDE
Claudia Shear and James Lapine's cunningly written, raffish play, which was staged earlier this year at New York Theatre Workshop, has moved to Broadway. (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

THE GREEN BIRD
The director Julie Taymor brings Carlo Gozzi's fairy tale to the stage with puppets, masks, and live performers. The music is by Elliot Goldenthal. (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

HYPATIA
In Mac Wellman's latest play, the fifth-century mathematician and philosopher travels through time bearing gifts. (Soho Rep, 46 Walker St. 334-0962. Closes May 20.)

JACKIE MASON: MUCH ADO ABOUT EVERYTHING
The comic is back on Broadway. (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR
To paraphrase Woody Allen: If Jesus Christ were alive today, he'd never stop throwing up. For those of us with less than Christ-like standards, though, this misguided Broadway revival of Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber's 1971 musical version of the Saviour's last days on earth is less nauseating than it is plain disappointing. The show, which began as a concept album and should have stayed one, starts out by asking the tantalizing question "What's the buzz?" but never delivers a theatrically satisfying answer. Still, with its archaic whiff of right-wing outrage and singable seventies-rock score, it's fun for nostalgia's sake. Gale Edwards is the director. (Ford Center for the Performing Arts, 213 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

JITNEY
August Wilson's first play, set in 1977, about the lives of a group of Pittsburgh gypsy-cab drivers. (Second Stage, 307 W. 43rd St. 246-4422.)

KISS ME, KATE
With all its admirable expertise and its various delights, this production of the Cole Porter musical is oddly earthbound: it comes down to the vexing issue of chemistry. The leads, Marin Mazzie and Brian Stokes Mitchell, are expert players, but they are not—in the true meaning of the words—star performers. (11/29/99) (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

LI'L BROWN BROTHERS/NIKIMALIKA (I'VE BEEN TO AMERICA)
Chris B. Millado's drama examines the 1904 St. Louis World Exposition's Philippine Exhibit, in which Filipinos were put on display as savages. (Grove Street Playhouse, 39 Grove St. 581-8896. Closes May 21.)

LUCRECE
From the Willow Cabin Theatre Company, Thornton Wilder's 1932 translation of "Le Viol de Lucrece," by André Obey. (Ohio Theatre, 66 Wooster St. 886-1889.)

MANCHILD IN THE PROMISED LAND
Claude Brown's 1965 autobiographical novel, about growing up in Harlem, adapted for the stage by Wynn Handman and Joseph Edward. (American Place Theatre, 111 W. 46th St. 239-6200. Closes May 21.)

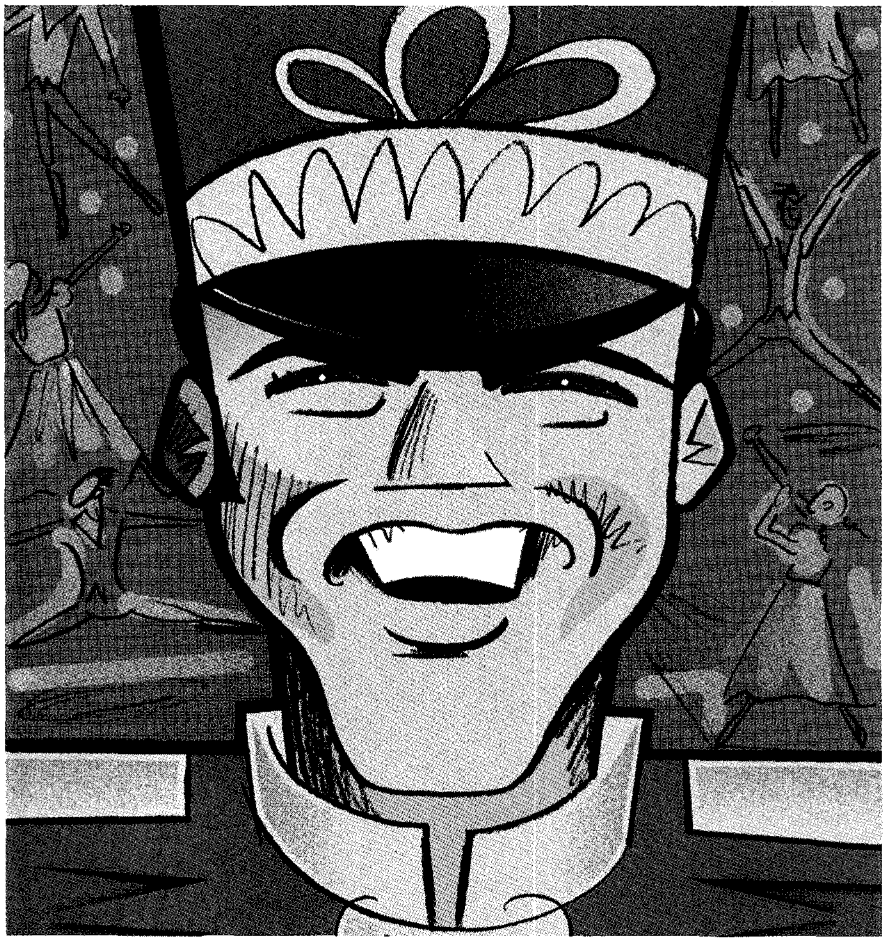
A MOON FOR THE MISBEGOTTEN
A solid and satisfying revival of Eugene O'Neill's 1943 drama. Gabriel Byrne's performance as James Tyrone, an alcoholic actor who returns to his Connecticut farm from New York to unburden himself in the arms of the earth mother Josie (Cherry Jones), is something to see: though his character is half-dead from drink, Byrne's vivid portrait conjures all the dimensions of the tortured emotion that got him there. Daniel Sullivan directed. (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

THE MUSIC MAN
Craig Bierko is Professor Harold Hill, and Rebecca Luker is Marian the Librarian, in a revival of Meredith Willson's 1957 musical. Susan Stroman is the director. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100.)

OUR LADY OF SLIGO
Sinéad Cusack has the leading role in Sebastian Barry's latest drama, under the direction of Max Stafford-Clark. (5/8/00) (Irish Repertory Theatre, 132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737.)

PURGATORY / THE CAT AND THE MOON
An evening of two one-acts by W. B. Yeats, directed by Royd Climenhaga. May 21-23 at 8. (Hudson Guild Theatre, 441 W. 26th St. 229-7881.)

THE REAL THING
Before the young British playwright Patrick Marber's drama about the excruciating machinations of coupledom, "Closer" (1997), there was this one by the seasoned British playwright Tom Stoppard, in 1984; in comparison, Stoppard's take seems surprisingly innocent (how did we ever manage to torture one another without computers?). But revived here with an excellent cast (especially Stephen Dillane) and subtle direction by David Leveaux, the elder playwright's most accessible work remains the wittiest, sharpest look at that twisted thing called love to come around in decades. (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)


Craig Bierko, in "The Music Man," by Meredith Willson.

THE RIDE DOWN MT. MORGAN
"Why have I been condemned?" the aptly named bigamist Lyman Felt (Patrick Stewart) asks, rather whinily, toward the end of Arthur Miller's latest play, an examination of the seeming impossibility of fidelity, or, at least, lifelong marriage. And you trust that Lyman is truly in the dark about how he could be convicted of having love for two women—the childlike but uptight and aging Wasp he first married (the wonderful Frances Conroy), and a sexy, sophisticated, but oblivious young Jew (Katy Selverstone). The problem with Miller's project is that his lying Lyman is no longer in love with his first wife at all, and he seems to have only lust for the second. In the end, it makes a really good case for divorce. David Esbjornson directed. (Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

ROSE
Olympia Dukakis has the title role in a new play by Martin Sherman, which traces a Jewish woman's life, from her childhood in Russia to the Warsaw ghettos to Miami Beach. Nancy Meckler is the director. (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 239-6200. Closes May 20.)

ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY
The troupe continues a three-week residency at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. May 16-20 at 7:30: Friedrich Schiller's "Don Carlos." ♦ May 21-22 at 7:30: "A Midsummer Night's Dream." Continues through May 27. (BAM's Harvey Theatre, 651 Fulton St., Brooklyn. 718-636-4100.)

SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER
John Travolta is not easy to replace, nor are the ashes of disco fever likely to reignite, as this show, based on the 1977 movie, demonstrates. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

SMALL CRAFT WARNING
An encore revival by the Worth Street Theatre of their 1999 staging of the Tennessee Williams play. David Greenspan leads the cast. (Tribeca Playhouse, 111 Reade St. 532-8887.)

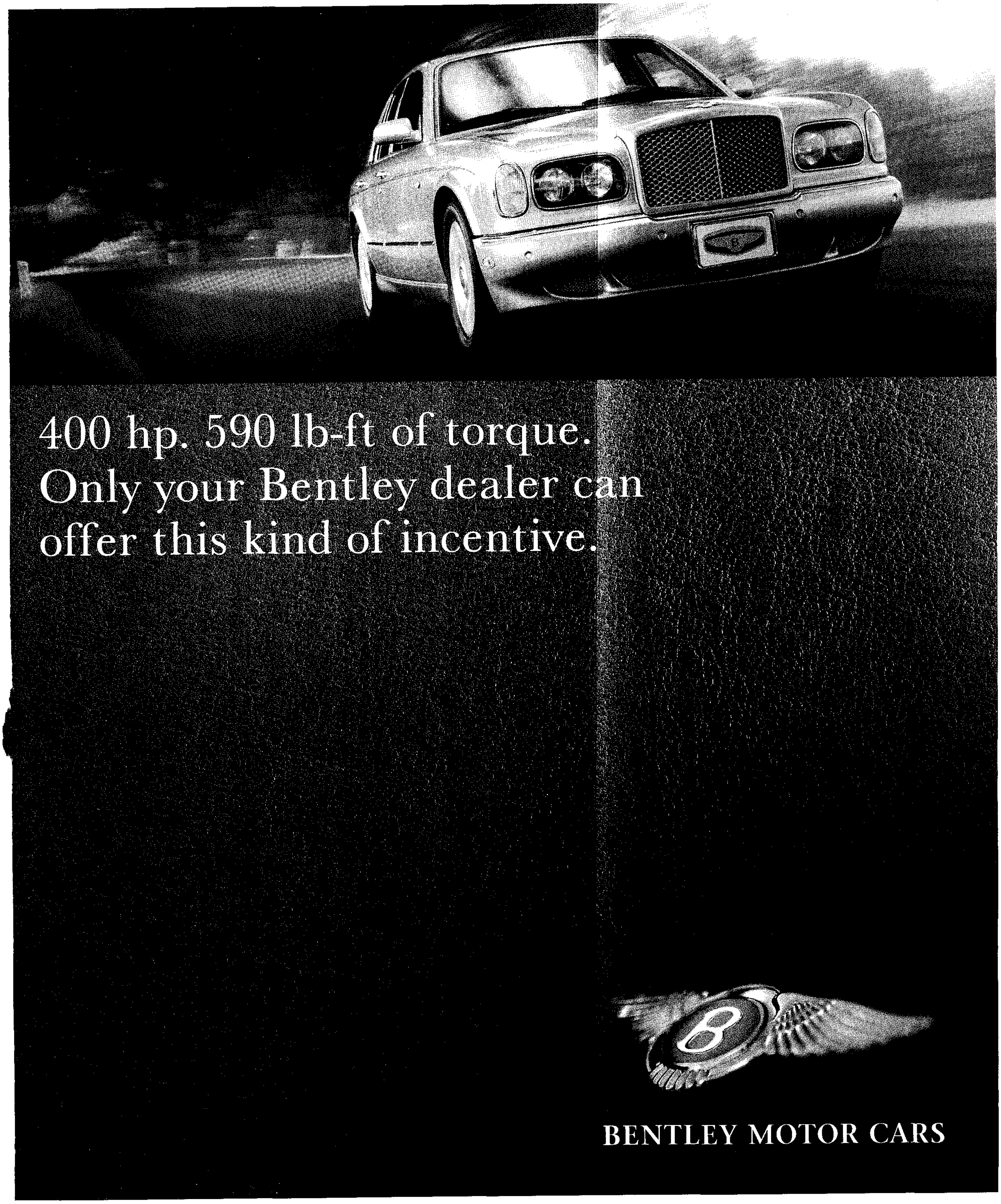
SONG OF SONGS
Sholom Aleichem's love story is the basis for this musical, with a book by Daniel Goldstein and a score by Michael Friedman. (Greenwich Street Theatre, 547 Greenwich St. 592-4005. Closes May 20.)

SWING!
No plot, just a hot band, Olympic-class dancers, and major panties—this show, a tribute to swing and its dance counterpart, the Lindy (mother of the jitterbug), lives up to its name. It swings. Directed and choreographed by Lynne Taylor-Corbett. (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

TALLER THAN A DWARF
From the pen of Elaine May, a new comedy starring Matthew Broderick and Parker Posey and directed by Alan Arkin. (Longacre, 220 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

TRUE WEST
A thrilling revival of Sam Shepard's 1980 play, directed by Matthew Warchus. It's a droll tall tale of sibling rivalry, in which an intrusive, beer-swilling outlaw named Lee and his brother, Austin, a put-upon Ivy League screenwriter, face off in their vaca-

ROBERT RISKO



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FAKING IT *Three years ago, around the time Ry Cooder rounded up the members of the Buena Vista Social Club, the intrepid downtown guitar hero Marc Ribot embarked on a personal journey into the music of pre-Castro Cuba. But instead of reconstructing an authentic Cuban setting, Ribot simply gathered a few friends and began toying with the compositions of the Cuban bandleader Arsenio Rodriguez. Ribot and his band, los Cubanos Postizos (the Prosthetic Cubans), which comes to the Knitting Factory on May 19-20 to celebrate the release of its new album, "¡Muy Divertido! (Very Amusing!)," twists and grinds its way through its bilingual songs with all the grace and spirit of one of those old Chevrolets that still cruise the dusty streets of Havana.*

MARTIN SCHOELLER/SABA

tioning mother's tidy modern kitchen. John C. Reilly's roaring, as Lee, and Philip Seymour Hoffman's repressed hostility, as Austin, make for a wonderful contrast and a satisfyingly equal battle of wills, but when the actors switch roles (every few performances), Hoffman's derelict eyes, slurred sea-dog voice, and preternatural comic skills make the contest entertaining but lopsided. (3/27/00) (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)

TWO-HEADED
A tragicomedy by Julie Jensen, set on the Utah frontier in the nineteenth century. (Women's Project Theatre, 424 W. 55th St. 239-6200.)

UNCLE VANYA
Derek Jacobi, Laura Linney, Brian Murray, and Roger Rees take on Chekhov's play, under the direction of Michael Mayer. (5/8/00) (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 719-1300.)

WAITING IN THE WINGS
In the best of Noël Coward's postwar plays, old gallant theatricals duke it out in a retirement home, where they fire off some terrific one-liners. Although the play itself is somewhat creaky, the pros who bring it to life here aren't. (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

WAKE UP AND SMELL THE COFFEE
Eric Bogosian's latest solo show, directed by Jo Bonney. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Jane Street Theatre, Hotel Riverview Ballroom, 113 Jane St. 239-6200.)

THE WAVERLY GALLERY
Eileen Heckart portrays an aging Greenwich Village art dealer who must give up her gallery, in a new play by Kenneth Lonergan. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200. Closes May 21.)

WHEN THEY SPEAK OF RITA
Daisy B. Foote's drama, about a discontented housewife in rural New Hampshire. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 333-4052.)

THE WILD DUCK
The Century Center's Ibsen series continues with the playwright's 1884 drama. (111 E. 15th St. 982-6782. Closes May 20.)

THE WILD PARTY
Joseph Moncure March's Jazz Age poem is the basis for Michael John LaChiusa and George C. Wolfe's new musical, starring Mandy Patinkin, Eartha Kitt, and Toni Collette. Mr. Wolfe is the director. (4/24 & 5/1/00) (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200.)

YARD GAL
From London's Royal Court Theatre, Rebecca Prichard's drama about two juvenile delinquents on the run in London. (MCC, 120 W. 28th St. 727-7765. Closes May 21.)

LONG RUNS

ANNIE GET YOUR GUN
Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.

BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES
Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370.

CABARET
Studio 54, at 254 W. 54th St. 239-6200.

CHICAGO
Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

THE COUNTESS
Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.

DAME EDNA: THE ROYAL TOUR
Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.

DINNER WITH FRIENDS
Variety Arts, 110 Third Ave., at 14th St. 239-6200.

FORBIDDEN BROADWAY
Stardust, Broadway at 51st St. 239-6200.

THE LION KING
New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.

THE VAGINA MONOLOGUES
Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.

DANCE

NEW YORK CITY BALLET
May 17-19 at 8, May 20 at 2 and 8, and May 21 at 3: "The Sleeping Beauty." ♦ May 23 at 8: "Concerto Barocco," "Slonimsky's Earbox," "Fancy Free," and "Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 2." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Through June 25.)

AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE
May 17 at 2 and 8 and May 18 at 8: "Don Quixote." ♦ May 19 and May 22 at 8 and May 20 at 2 and 8: "Swan Lake." ♦ May 23 at 8: "Diversion of Angels" and "La Sylphide." (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000. Through July 1.)

MONTE/BROWN DANCE
The company, under the direction of the choreographers Elisa Monte and David Brown, presents two programs and three premières, including Brown's "Joint Venture," created as a wedding gift for troupe member Yvette Perry with an intricacy designed to challenge her notorious reserves of energy. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. May 16 at 7:30, May 17-20 at 8, and May 21 at 2 and 7:30.)

"DOUBLE TRACK"
Danspace Project and Dance Theatre Workshop combine forces to present a marvel of duplicity: for the second time around, the Dutch choreographer Beppie Blankert presents a 1986 duet nominally about waiting for a train. The original called for women dancers, but Blankert's metaphysical trickery works just as well with men, who, through the seamless use of onstage mirrors, appear to switch back and forth from solid form to spectral presence, vanishing or bleeding into each other. All the while you can hear them dancing, offstage, hidden from sight, disembodied. (219 W. 9th St. 924-0077. May 16-18 and May 21 at 7 and May 19-20 at 7 and 9.)

"LOVE, BETRAYAL, AND A BOWLING TROPHY"
The choreographer Iréne Hultman presents an evening-length work about unrequited love, loosely based on versions of the Don Juan story by Mozart, Byron, and Molière. (Danspace Project, St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. May 18-20 at 8:30 and May 21 at 7:30.)

"NIGHT LIGHT"
Drawing on archival photographs of the Chelsea neighborhood, the choreographer and performance artist Ann Carlson re-creates the activities of previous eras in their present-day locations (a farmer takes his pig to what is now a gallery, etc.), in a travelling site-specific work produced by the Kitchen. (For locations, call 255-5793, ext. 11. May 17-20 at 8:30. Through May 27.)

"SHEMAD"
The choreographer Cynthia Oliver offers a sort of livable insanity shared by five women who careen between myth and madness. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. May 18-21 at 8:30.)

"THE BEAT"
Former "Stomp" member Kamal Sinclair collaborates with playwright Robbie McCauley and poet Mustafa Shakir in a dance-theatre work that features Bakaari Wilder, the slack and lanky tapper whose easy cool countered Savion Glover's percussive heat in "Bring in da Noise." (Context Studios, 28 Avenue A, at 2nd St. 802-9350. May 18-20 at 8.)

PEARL LANG DANCE THEATRE
Four works by the seventy-eight-year-old choreographer. (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. May 19-20 at 8 and May 21 at 3.)

MIMI GARRARD DANCE COMPANY
For its thirty-fifth-anniversary season, the thirteen-member company offers a celebration in two installments, in May and June. This week's program includes "Night Traffic," "Joplin Suite," and the première of "Ravelette." (Theatre of the Riverside Church, W. 120th St. and Riverside Dr. 674-6868. May 18-20 at 8 and May 21 at 3.)

"NEW SEX"
As a dancer, the fluent Terry Hollis has been almost ubiquitous, appearing with a remarkable range of companies. In the past two years, he's proven equally watchable as a choreographer: his new work explores sexual communication in a range of situations from the workplace to the home front. (Dixon Place at Vineyard 26, at 309 E. 26th St. 532-1546. May 18 at 8 and May 21 at 3.)

NIGHT LIFE

CONCERTS

"DRAWN TO DEATH: A THREE PANEL OPERA"
Art Spiegelman's work in progress, an operatic history of the American comic strip, features music by Phillip Johnston. (St. Ann's Church, 157 Montague St., Brooklyn. 718-858-2424. May 18-19 at 8.)

"FOR DANCERS ONLY"
Trumpeter Wynton Marsalis, whose mantra before every performance of the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra is something to the effect of "We've come to swing," puts his money where his mouth is for this ballroom show. (Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. 721-6500. May 19 at 8.)

"LOST JAZZ SHRINES"
Those old enough to remember the Half Note club still get a warm glow when they talk about the days of Zoot and Al and the gang swinging the paint off the joint's walls. Unfortunately, Zoot Sims, Al Cohn, and saxophone legends Ben Webster and Sonny Stitt are all gone, as is the club itself. We'll have to make do with a well-intentioned tribute from saxophonists Eric Alexander, Don Braden, David (Fathead) Newman, and Loren Schoenberg, accompanied by the Darrell Grant trio. (Tribeca Performing Arts Center, 199 Chambers St. 346-8510. May 20 at 7:30.)

ABDELLI
A Berber mandola player and singer, born in Algeria and now living in exile in Belgium, makes his New York City début. His music, which can be found on his 1995 album, "New Moon," adds Southern American influences to traditional North African instrumentation, resulting in hypnotic rhythms and strangely rich textures. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. May 20 at 8.)

MIRIAM MAKEBA
The great South African singer and anti-apartheid activist, perhaps best known for her work in the Broadway musical "Sarafina!" and her amazing performances on Paul Simon's "Graceland" tour,

TABLES FOR TWO

NORMA'S
Le Parker Meridien, 118 W. 57th St. (708-7460)—This tycoonish breakfast spot in midtown's most Continental hotel—all chrome and leather, with six giant portholes—exudes efficient ocean-liner luxury. French-press coffeemakers are duly plunged at each table (and replaced before the coffee grows cold), fresh orange juice flows freely, and, although all the basics are accounted for (from bagels and lox to Krispy Kreme doughnuts), what this place really wants to do is reinvent the morning meal. The extravagant menu will seem foreign to domesticated New Yorkers used to the corner-coffee-cart rush. (Foie Gras Brioche French Toast? A bowl of Red Berry Risotto "Oatmeal"?)

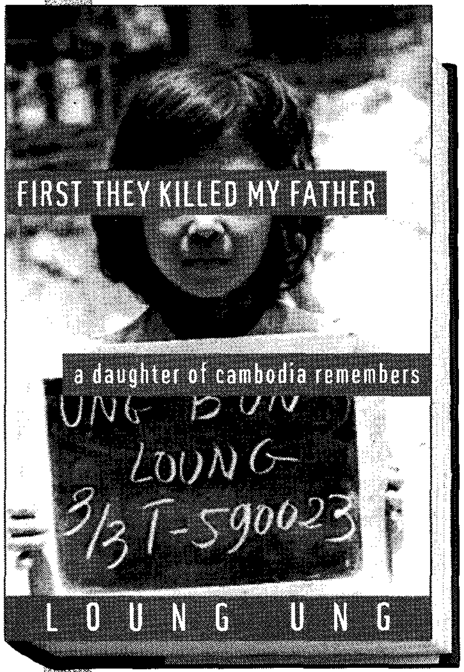
At 6:30 A.M., when the place opens, solitary hotel guests read the *Times* and breakfast Continentally; by 8 A.M., the crowd is more active. On a recent morning, two men in checked blazers and Philip Johnson glasses puzzled over a diagram they'd sketched on a paper napkin, while a stately German couple worked with a map on their strategy to take midtown. Later, a group of suits managed a perfunctory rendition of "Happy Birthday" before settling in for heavy-duty shoptalk.

The best dishes are impossible to consume on the fly, so the orders get larger as people with time on their hands (say, the young movie actor, just rolled out of bed, dressed in a rumpled T-shirt) amble in for a splurge. The seared-rock-lobster-and-asparagus omelette is terrific, and the duck-confit hash is ideal for a millionaire lumberjack. The kitchen excels at such sweet dishes as brioche French toast topped with berries and maple syrup, and mango-papaya, brown-butter, and cinnamon crêpes. A revisionist eggs Benedict combines precisely pitched hollandaise sauce, Canadian bacon, and grilled asparagus with a buttermilk pancake—and the fluffy stunt works. A newly expanded lunch menu seems similarly boisterous. Macaroni and cheese is loaded with plump lobster meat, and the exploded chicken potpie—a miniature Vesuvius—is deeply satisfying. But fastidiousness spoils some of the fun: apple-wood-smoked bacon is too short on grease, and the quesadilla is so bland it doesn't deserve its name.

Despite Norma's location, the food bears no relation to dreary hotel buffets. Its eccentric flourishes are enough to make New Yorkers shirk their morning routines and bypass the daily bagel. (Open daily for breakfast and lunch. Entrées $11-$25.)

—*Owen Phillips*

"Harrowing...a book you will read through tears....But it is also an important book." —*The Denver Post*



"This book left me gasping for air." —Iris Chang, author of *The Rape of Nanking*

"I lost a night's sleep to this book because I literally could not put it down." —Lucy Grealy, author of *Autobiography of a Face*

"Reading these pages has strengthened me in my own struggle to disarm the powers of violence in this world." —Sister Helen Prejean, CSJ, author of *Dead Man Walking*

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returns to town to perform songs from her new studio album, "Homeland." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. May 20 at 8.)

LARRY RIDLEY
Bassist and educator Ridley, whose résumé reads like a short history of modern jazz, has stocked his Jazz Legacy Ensemble with journeyman players—trumpeter Virgil Jones, saxophonist Charles Davis, pianist Richard Wyands, and drummer Jimmy Wormworth—whose own vast experience insures idiomatically correct and inspired playing no matter what the repertoire. (Schomburg Center, Lenox Ave. at 135th St. 491-2206. May 21 at 3.)

PHISH
Vermont's favorite laid-back, jam-happy combo. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. May 21-22 at 7:30.)

JONI MITCHELL
A little over a month ago at the Hammerstein Ballroom, Mitchell was the recipient of a constellated tribute concert. The performers who lined up for a dip into her knotty songbook included Elton John, James Taylor, Richard Thompson, Shawn Colvin, and Mary Chapin Carpenter. Usually, these events come posthumously, or they represent some sort of creative death certificate. But Mitchell remains wildly, if inconsistently, fecund, putting out an album about as often as Woody Allen makes a new movie. On her latest offering, "Both Sides Now," the Canadian iconoclast takes a break from her own material and covers a dozen smoky jazz standards. Remaking Billie Holiday's "You've Changed" might sound like an ill-advised idea, until you hear Mitchell's inspired and unexpectedly tender reading. (Theatre at Madison Square Garden. 307-7171. May 22-23 at 8.)

CLUBS

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

BAM CAFÉ
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-636-4139)—May 19: **Chocolate Genius** is Marc Anthony Thompson, a vocalist with a gift for incisive personal narratives and an emotionally keyed-up delivery.

BOWERY BALLROOM
6 Delancey St. (533-2111)—May 17: Once the pride of Chicago, **Veruca Salt** has gone from being the next big thing to the same old thing. Vocalist Louise Post is still a savage front woman, though. Following the departure of co-leader Nina Gordon in 1998, Post has become the band's main creative force, and its latest, "Revolver" is suitably perfumed and angry.

BROWNIES
169 Avenue A, at 10th St. (420-8392)—May 19-20: Boston's **Upper Crust** performs power pop ditties while dressed in such eighteenth-century garb as powdered wigs and knickers. It may be a silly and questionable gimmick, but the show on May 20, featuring fellow Beantown rockers **Gravel Pit**, is another story. Led by iron-lunged vocalist Jed Parish, this hardworking quartet produces highly inventive organ-fuelled pop. Its latest album, "Silver Gorilla," features clever lyrics, catchy melodies, and arrangements that are more complex than you'd expect.

CENTRO FLY
45 W. 21st St. (627-7770)—The former Tramps space is now a wildly stylish night club, and on May 23 *Flyer* magazine, a periodical devoted to the club culture centering on turntables instead of guitars, celebrates its second anniversary with performances by Detroit techno innovator **Derrick May** and by the **Modernist**, a.k.a Jörg Burger, a producer from Cologne, whose speciality is minimalist house music and who is making his United States début.

IRVING PLAZA
17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—May 17-19: **Elliott Smith.** The slacker troubadour turned Oscar nominee (thanks to his lachrymose work on the soundtrack to "Good Will Hunting") returns with "Figure 8," another collection of lovesick, acoustic-guitar-driven murmurings. With his Hollywood moment just a memory, Smith's new record débuted at No. 99, and he's sure to slide further down the charts. He may no longer be the flavor of the month, but his cinematic folk music remains perfect for intimate clubs. May 20: If Bob Marley and the Wailers were the heart of reggae, then **Frederick (Toots) Hibbert** and his **Maytals** must surely be its soul: it was the group's 1968 hit, "Do the Reggay," that gave ska, dub, rock steady, and every other substratum of Jamaican music one all-encompassing name. Bring your dancing shoes for "Funky Kingston" and "Pressure Drop." May 22-23: **Sleater-Kinney**, the critically acclaimed all-female, power-punk trio out of Olympia, Washington. ♦ The Swing Dance Society gathers here every Sunday, with sets from eight until midnight. For information on the Society, call 696-9737.

KNITTING FACTORY
74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—May 17: **Tim Reynolds,** who has lent his guitar work to the Dave Matthews Band, performs an acoustic show. May 17: Up-and-coming neo-folkie **Stephan Smith.** May 19-20: **Marc Ribot y los Cubanos Postizos.** May 21: Two acts from Olympia, Washington. The **Bangs** are a trio of women who filter all sentiments through joyously tight guitar licks and driving drumbeats. **Sarah Dougher** holds a doctorate in comparative literature and sings aching and earnest songs about lost love which don't insult your intelligence.

MAXWELL'S
1039 Washington St., Hoboken (201-798-0406)—May 17: **The Bangs** and **Sarah Dougher** (see the Knitting Factory). May 22: **Man or Astroman?** These space-age stowaways from Alabama play lo-fi surf music punctuated with sci-fi samples from the fifties; they've been known to tour with a theremin and a six-foot tesla coil. Drag racing, double agents, and interplanetary travel are among the issues addressed in their songs. The band's forthcoming effort, recorded with former Nirvana producer and noted sonic terrorist Steve Albini, is called "A Spectrum of Infinite Scale." Expanding its colorful stage act, Man or Astroman? will reportedly be showcasing a human brain encased in formaldehyde onstage.

MERCURY LOUNGE
217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—May 18: A pair of neo-country acts on Chicago's Bloodshot label. **Neko Case & Her Boyfriends.** Before her current incarnation as a country singer, Case was a drummer in a pop-punk outfit, and that hard-hitting sensibility jells perfectly with the dark tales found on her latest album, "Furnace Room Lullaby." With **Kelly Hogan & the Pine Valley Cosmonauts.** Hogan's voice is so pretty it'll make you want to cry. May 20: **Man or Astroman?** (see Maxwell's).

S.O.B.'S
204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—May 19: Underground Los Angeles rappers **Dilated Peoples.** May 21 and May 23: **Lucy Pearl,** a sort of R. & B. supergroup, features Raphael Saadiq, of Tony! Toni! Toné!, Dawn Robinson, of En Vogue, and Ali Shaheed Muhammad, of A Tribe Called Quest. Dining.

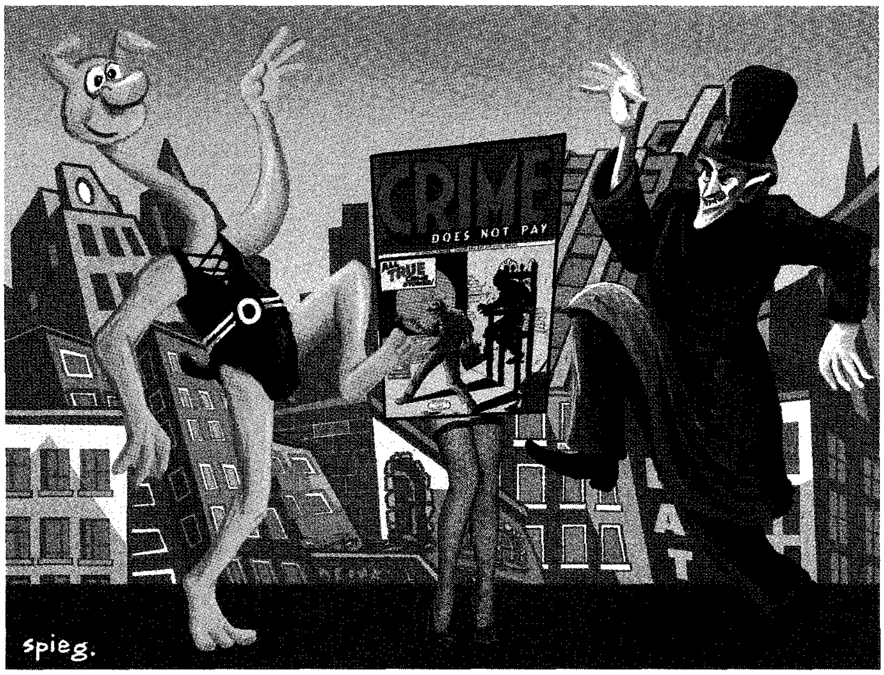
TONIC
107 Norfolk St. (358-7503)—May 18: **Arto Lindsay's** ongoing hybrid project—crossing his downtown noise-jazz roots with the rhythms of Brazil—has lately taken an even more adventurous turn, as if he'd switched his recording location from Ipanema Beach to rush hour in downtown Rio. On his latest release, "Prize," he's turned up both the drum and bass and his trademark skronk guitar, and he's allowed his placid bossa-nova experiments to unravel into the bumptious racket of full-blown samba.

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

BIRDLAND
315 W. 44th St. (581-3080)—May 17-20: The **Jackie McLean** sextet. In the fifties, alto saxophonist McLean was a sideman on early Miles Davis sessions; by the sixties, players like the iconoclastic Ornette Coleman had appeared as sidemen on McLean recordings. Having kept himself in the fray for decades, McLean is now a compact compendium of modern jazz. His range erases the distinctions between bop, hard bop, and modal playing. Dining.

BLUE NOTE
131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through May 21: The **Abbey Lincoln** quartet. Celebrating the joys of a midlife resurgence, she of the gutsy survivor spirit and the indeterminate pitch struts the stage with such force it's as if she never intends to get off.

IRIDIUM
48 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Through May 21: While their timing might have been better—their collaborative album came out three years ago—the meeting of saxophonists **James Moody** and **Mark Turner** will still be a treat. Moody is Moody, an irrepressible bebop virtuoso with a silly streak a mile long; Turner is a brainy relative newcomer who respects his elders while keeping his eyes



"Drawn to Death: A Three Panel Opera," at St. Ann's Church.

ART SPIEGELMAN

trained on the future. Thankfully, neither likes to back down from a face-off. Mondays belong to electric-guitar innovator **Les Paul.**

JAZZ STANDARD
116 E. 27th St. (576-2232)—Through May 21: The **Harold Land** and **Billy Higgins** quintet. The Los Angeles jazz scene of the bop and hard-bop era has been getting a lot of attention lately, both in print and in reissued recordings. This chance to hear two authentic West Coast veterans—tenor saxophonist Land and drummer Higgins—is the best way to assess the L.A. legacy. Higgins, who has played with everyone from Ornette Coleman to Lee Morgan, is among the most accomplished drummers alive. Land is a smart hard-bopper with a sure, sculpted sound whose credentials stretch back to a celebrated stint with Clifford Brown and Max Roach in the early fifties. He and Higgins have known each other for just as long; their appearance here was a jazz high point of 1999. Dining.

SWEET BASIL
88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—Through May 21: The **Marc Cary Trio.** His apprenticeship with the late singer Betty Carter and subsequent sojourn as a smart and alert sideman have helped pianist Cary blossom into a highly promising stylist and leader. Dining.

VILLAGE VANGUARD
178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—Saxophonist **Joe Lovano** has just released another beauty of an album, "52nd Street Themes," which celebrates the music of Tadd Dameron, with tips of the hat to other jazz icons, including Charlie Parker, Miles Davis, Thelonious Monk, and Billy Strayhorn. At a glorious peak in his own playing, Lovano has never sounded more robust and affecting. He shares the stage here through May 21 with his first-rate nonet, and keeps the sparkling designs of the obscure Willie (Face) Smith, who arranged the material on his latest album, in clear view. A week not to be missed. The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.

ART
MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (879-5500)—**"Now! Modern Photographs from the Permanent Collection."** Through Oct. 22. ♦ **"After Nicolas Poussin: New Etchings by Leon Kossoff."** Through Aug. 13. ♦ **"Art and Oracle: Spirit Voices of Africa."** Through July 30. ♦ **"Painters in Paris: 1895-1950"** presents more than a hundred modernist works from the museum's collection, by thirty-eight masters. Through Dec. 31. ♦ **"The World of Scholar's Rocks."** Through Aug. 20. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—**"Making Choices,"** the twenty-four-part show, concentrates on works made between 1920 and 1960, drawn exclusively from the museum's extensive holdings, in a series of tightly focussed exhibitions, several devoted to a single artist (*Man Ray, Cartier-Bresson, Morandi*). Closing, in stages, on Aug. 22, Sept. 19, and Sept. 26. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, and Thursdays, 10:30 to 5:45; Fridays, 10:30 to 8:15.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3500)—Selections from the permanent collection are on display. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 9 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 9 to 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART
Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3676)—The latest Biennial exhibition would be a greater pleasure—the installation is thoughtfully paced, spare, and clear—if only there were more art works that held one's attention. Instead we get a "Stepford Wives" version of contemporary art: most everything looks placid, numb, and earnestly mediocre. Exceptions include a sprawling mobile by the whimsical Sarah Sze, a trio of John Currin's odes to Wasp pulchritude, and Robert Gober's ghoulish sink sculptures, in which faucets are replaced by cadaverous legs. Painting, despite its current liveliness, is poorly represented, which may be why the video installations, especially those by Doug Aitken and Shirin Neshat, make such a strong impression. Through June 4. (Open Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 9.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM AT PHILIP MORRIS
120 Park Ave., at 42nd St. (878-2550)—Best known for sly interpretations of Mughal miniatures, Shazia Sikander pumps up the scale in an unveiled bid to be more than a doyenne of detail. A mural wraps around three walls with loose layers of translucent paper pinned to its surface. The artist's trademark iconography—her stock of figures, architectural detail, and vegetation—is painted in a loose, gestural style reminiscent of the pattern-and-decoration artists of the seventies, who were also inspired by non-Western sources. The spectre of Kushner makes us pine for Kangra, the Hindu style that influenced the artist's earlier work. Through July 7. (Open weekdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 7:30.)

THE NEW MUSEUM
583 Broadway (219-1222)—**"Tiboricity: Design and Undesign by Tibor Kalman."** "The perfect state of creative bliss is having power (you are fifty) and knowing nothing (you are nine)." Or so Kalman quipped last year, near the end of his life at the age of fifty. The visionary designer never lost touch with his inner fourth grader, convinced that good design was "untested and untried." Kalman's wit—"Hat Shoe Gesundheit" reads one ad for a men's store—often provided sheep's clothing for a politically active wolf weaned on student movements in the sixties. An entire gallery is devoted to his controversial *Colors* magazine, produced for Benetton, which includes images of a black Queen Elizabeth and a blond, blue-eyed Michael Jackson. The entire exhibition's design is as playful as its subject, with blue vitrines, pink pedestals, and

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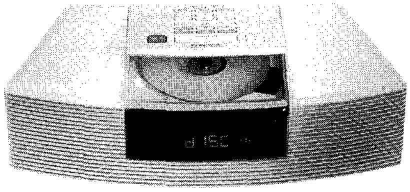

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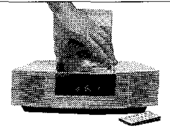

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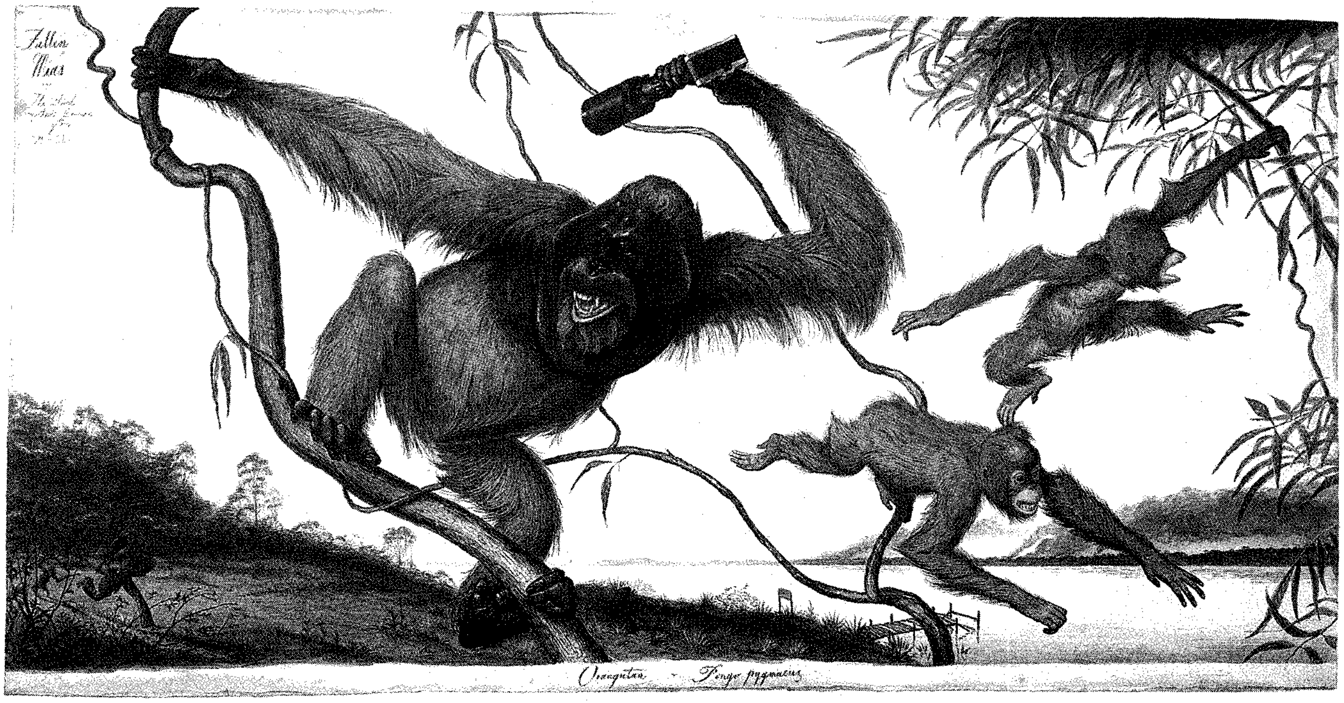


"Fallen Mias," part of an exhibition of watercolors by Walton Ford, at Kasmin (see Chelsea Short List).

wall text printed on the ceiling. Through Aug. 20. (Open Wednesdays and Sundays, noon to 6; Thursdays through Saturdays, noon to 8.)

GALLERIES–UPTOWN

Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.

ENRIQUE CHAGOYA
Like an art-school class clown, this Mexican California artist impersonates and appropriates every visual idiom in sight, producing gleeful riffs that mix cartooning, painting, and collage. Working your way through Chagoya's palimpsestlike images takes patience but offers plenty of odd rewards: Che Guevara reading R. Crumb on the toilet, for example, or Alma-Tadema turning into a feathered snake. Cannibals, nuns, Superman, and William Burroughs also make appearances here, but any expectations of intelligibility should be checked at the door. Through May 20. (Adams, 41 W. 57th St. 644-5665.)

HANS HOFFMAN
Crayon isn't normally the medium we associate with Hoffman, but the dozens of small giddy sketches on view here are some of his most delightful work. Drawn in Provincetown in the thirties and forties, they are full of careening, scribbled shapes, intermittently recognizable as sailboats, houses, and hills. The larger oils that accompany them seldom match the drawings' supple, ecstatic velocity. Through June 10. (Ameringer Howard, 41 E. 57th St. 935-1110.)

BILL KING
Now in his seventies, King has been making stilt-legged figures, in cedar, steel, and Dacron, for almost half a century. The current reunion, culled from the past twenty years of sculptures, makes for a virtual cocktail party, full of smirking smokers, feuding couples, and slim, startled-looking débutantes. In the back room, a recently completed aluminum piece depicts two tennis players, one crouching like a piece of accordion-folded origami to receive the other's serve. The planar language may come from David Smith, but the concise, comic gesture, all eagerness on one side and apprehension on the other, is pure King. Through May 26. (Kraushaar, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 307-5730.)

AGNES MARTIN
With their characteristic air of prim, beatific tranquillity, the dowager of minimalism's latest stripe pictures come in a choice of three tints: salmon, yellow, or powder blue. The palette is echt Baby Gap, and the titles are equally sunny and affirmative: "Everyday Happiness," "I Love the Whole World," "Happiness-Glee," etc. They might almost be chapter headings in a guru's memoir. The eighty-eight-year-old artist is plainly in Nirvana, and her career has reached the kind of tasteful zenith that prompts an occasional murmur. Can we be forgiven for wanting more than just Martin's usual generous serving of skim milk and sunshine? Through June 10. (Pace Wildenstein, 32 E. 57th St. 421-3292.)

LOUISA MATTIASDOTTIR
Mattiasdottir, a New York painter who died in February at the age of eighty-three, painted stubbornly traditional subjects—portraits, still-lifes, and landscapes of her native Iceland—with an exhilarating, plainspoken freshness. Translating real forms into brushy, color-soaked planes, she created a distinctively spacious world, both Spartan and theatrical, where individual objects seem farther apart than in reality. The fourteen paintings on view include two of her finest panoramic landscapes, both of which juxtapose fjords and sea against the endearingly clunky forms of sheep, ponies, and children. They sweep the cobwebs from the Arcadian tradition. Through June 4. (Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. 879-6606.)

Short List

FREDERICK EDWIN CHURCH
Berry-Hill, 11 E. 70th St. 744-2300.
Through July 15.

ELIZABETH COOPER
Roger Smith, 501 Lexington Ave., at 47th St.
832-8831. Through June 1.

INKE ESSENHIGH / PETER HALLEY
Mary Boone, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.
752-2929. Both shows through June 24.

LUCIAN FREUD
Acquavella, 18 E. 79th St. 734-6300.
Through May 19.

ANDY GOLDSWORTHY
Galerie Lelong, 20 W. 57th St. 315-0470.
Through June 17.

DIANA HOROWITZ
MB Modern, 41 E. 57th St. 371-3444.
Through May 20.

FRANCIS PICABIA
Werner, 4 E. 77th St. 988-1623. Through June 3.

LORRAINE SHEMESH
Stone, 113 E. 90th St. 987-1655. Through June 9.

NEIL WELLIVER
De Nagy, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.
262-5050. Through June 9.

GALLERIES–CHELSEA

KATHARINA FRITSCH
Fritsch's heart-shaped floor piece, made of shiny silver coins and measuring forty feet across, threatens to transform gallerygoing into window shopping, since it can be viewed from the street just as easily as from the gallery. Perhaps intended as an ironic comment on the booming art market, "Money Heart" instead recalls recent works that look to minimalism for inspiration. Both Tony Feher and Felix Gonzalez-Torres have entered the same ring, to far greater effect. Through June 23. (Marks, 522 W. 22nd St. 243-0200.)

GILLIAN WEARING
This British artist, who won the Turner Prize in 1997, has befriended a louche crew of drifters, whom he has videotaped for the past several years. Shot in black-and-white against a backdrop of white paper, the three-part projection recalls Avedon's portraits of the American West, as well as August Sander's photographic catalogue of social types. Though the work is twenty-three minutes long, there's no narrative and little action, just drunk and sometimes disorderly men and women stumbling and squabbling. Some viewers may cry exploitation, but artists have looked to lowlifes as muses since the days of Caravaggio. Through May 20. (Gorney, Bravin & Lee, 534 W. 26th St. 352-8372.)

"EFFECTS"
Boys will be boys. They will blow things up (see John Espinosa's lurid cibachrome), blast their music (Luis Gispert's cross between a Scott Burton chair and a subwoofer), and offer exaggerated reports of their physical endowments (Brian Crockett's sculptural self-portrait as a satyr). This very entertaining group show brings together five artists who rummage through Hollywood's special-effects closet. Through June 3. (Audiello Fine Art, 526 W. 26th St. 675-9082.)

Short List

RACKSTRAW DOWNES
Robert Miller, 524 W. 26th St.
366-4774. Through June 9.

WORLD MUSIC NOTES

To most music lovers, Indonesia means gamelans, the percussion orchestras of Java and Bali whose hypnotic timbres and multi-tiered rhythms have been elegantly represented by recordings on such labels as Ocora, Nonesuch, and Seven Seas World Music Library. Indonesia, however, is a huge nation; the fourth most populous country in the world, it stretches over thirty-two hundred miles, and its three thousand inhabited islands are home to some three hundred ethnic groups.

Smithsonian Folkways Recordings recently completed its twenty-volume survey of the vast variety of Indonesian music, one of the most ear-opening sonic travelogues ever produced. Ten years in the making, the **"Music in Indonesia"** project (sold as individual disks) is a collaboration between the label and the Indonesian Society for the Performing Arts, all coördinated by ethnomusicologist Philip Yampolsky, whose accompanying notes are as captivating as they are generous. Gamelanesque gong ensembles are well represented, but the disks favor less familiar genres and styles from remote rural areas, some of which have never before been represented on commercial recordings.

Individual disks offer enough of a musical style to whet the appetite, but not so much as to exhaust the uninitiated ear. **"Music from the Forests of Riau and Mentewai"** (Volume Seven) is a typical example: after five tracks of brittle, smile-inducing xylophone and gong solos and duets from the Petalangan people of eastern Sumatra, we eavesdrop on a healing ritual in which a shaman brokers the well-being of an individual or the entire community to the accompaniment of nighttime trance music. Next comes a series of surprisingly different xylophone tunes from a neighboring culture, and then we're transported to an island off Sumatra's west coast to listen in on "private singing" (recorded after much persuasion) and more ritual music. It's hard to play favorites among these releases, but the standouts include **"Music of Biak, Irian Jaya"** (Volume Ten), in which rugged tribal sounds mix with the "civilizing" influence of Dutch missionaries; **"Betawi and Sundanese Music of the North Coast of Java"** (Volume Five), where a European-influenced brass band provides the oddest imaginable confluence of Swiss Alps and tropical rain forests; and **"Music of Maluku"** (Volume Nineteen), a potent collection from the historic Moluccan "spice islands," which concludes with a devotional rite in which men stab themselves vigorously with iron awls and run skewers through their throats, protected by their spiritual powers from serious injury.

—*James M. Keller*

WALTON FORD
Kasmin, 293 Tenth Ave., at 27th St. 563-4474. Through June 30.
PAUL GEORGES
Center for Figurative Painting, 115 W. 30th St. 868-3452. Through June 10.
VANESSA JANE PHAFF
I-20 Gallery, 529 W. 20th St. 645-1100. Through June 17.
PIPILOTTI RIST
Luhring Augustine, 531 W. 24th St. 206-9100. Through May 27.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

BONNIE COLLURA
These drawings and sculptures, whose cultural references range from Bernini's St. Ludovica to Disney's Snow White, could take hours to decipher, but their visual impact is immediate. The artist's idiosyncratic sculptural materials—a combination of foam, putty, and metal, among others—now include the cellophane grass used to line Easter baskets. Just as Easter conflates the Resurrection with kitschy cottontails, Collura's recombinant narratives blend high and low, morphing the familiar into the new. Through May 26. (Lehman Maupin, 39 Greene St. 965-0753.)

Short List

BO BARTLETT
P.P.O.W, 476 Broome St. 941-8642. Through June 3.
SERENA BOCCHINO
Exhibit A, 160 Mercer St. 343-0230. Through June 17.
SQUEAK CARNWATH
Beitzel, 102 Prince St. 219-2863. Through June 3.
JOHN CHAMBERLAIN
Pace Wildenstein, 142 Greene St. 431-9224. Through June 10.
KURT KAUPER
Deitch Projects, 76 Grand St. 343-7300. Through June 3.
DAVID SCHER
Tilton, 49 Greene St. 941-1775. Through May 27.
DONNA SHARRETT
Pelavin, 13 Jay St. 925-9424. Through June 24.

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

SOTHEBY'S
May 17-18: Contemporary art, including important works by Rothko, de Kooning, Warhol, and Dubuffet. ♦ May 17: Pre-Columbian art. ♦ May 18: American Indian art. ♦ May 19: A sale of African and Oceanic art includes the acclaimed African-art collection of the Belgian Count Baudouin de Grunne, especially notable for containing numerous series representing a specific genre of works from one tribe, such as Tabwa figures, Mitsogo gongs, and Hemba rattles. ♦ May 20: An auction of wine. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 606-7000.)

CHRISTIE'S
May 17: The conclusion of the house's auction of contemporary art includes pieces by Basquiat, Elizabeth Peyton, and Matthew Barney. ♦ May 19: A sale of books, manuscripts, and letters includes previously unknown literary treasures by Ernest Hemingway, including his first draft of the short story "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber." ♦ May 23: Old Master paintings from the collection of Karl Lagerfeld. (20 Rockefeller Plaza, at 49th St. 636-2000.)

CHRISTIE'S EAST
May 17: American Indian art. ♦ May 22: Books and manuscripts. ♦ May 23: Old Master paintings, drawings, and picture frames. (219 E. 67th St. 606-0430.)

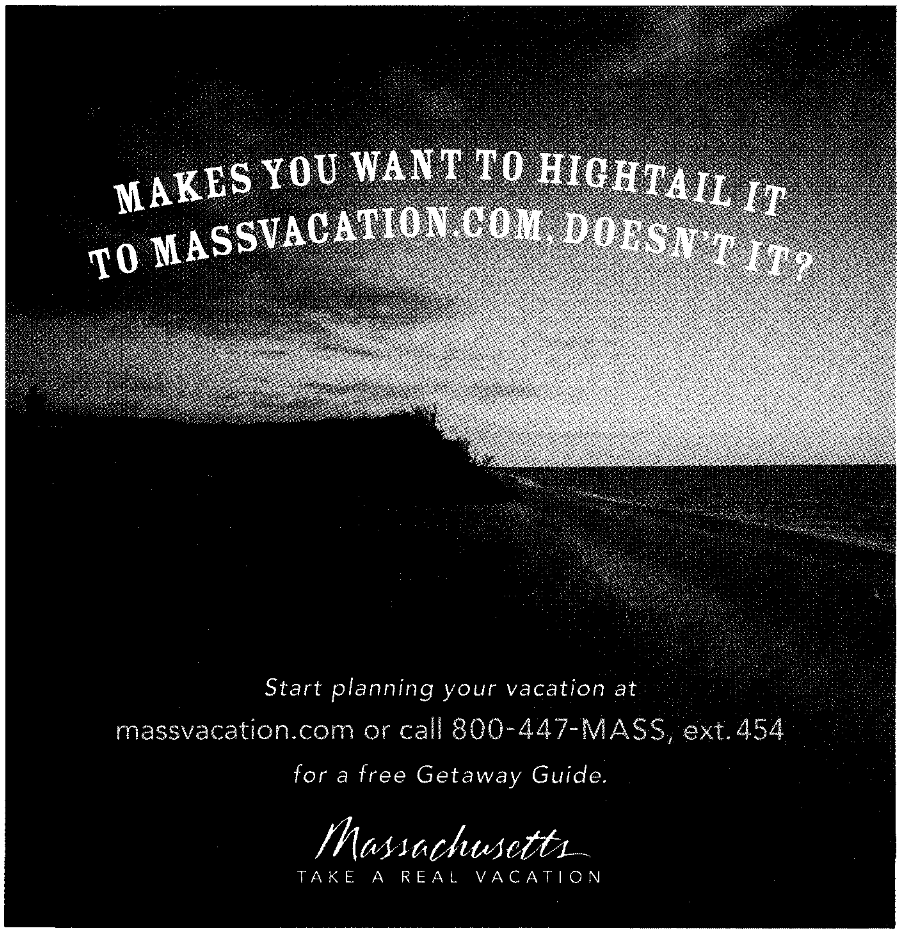
PHILLIPS
An auction of American art, including Impressionist canvases by Guy Rose, William Wendt, and Robert Spencer. (406 E. 79th St. 570-4830. May 23.)

DOYLE
Sales of English and Continental furniture and of Old Master paintings and drawings. (175 E. 87th St. 427-2730. May 17.)

SWANN
Early printed books. (104 E. 25th St. 254-4710. May 18.)

INTERNATIONAL FINE ART FAIR
The concluding day of this wide-ranging show of paintings, drawings, and sculpture. (7th Regiment Armory, Park Ave. at 66th St. May 17. For information, call 642-8572.)

NEW YORK INTERNATIONAL TRIBAL ANTIQUE SHOW
Fifty international dealers offer fine arts from native cultures of Africa, Oceania, Asia, Australia, and the Americas in this rigorously vetted exhibition and sale. (7th Regiment Armory, Park Ave. at 66th St. May 21-24, with a benefit preview on May 20. For information, call 472-1180.)



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PHOTOGRAPHY

"PICTURE THIS: SELF-PORTRAITS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS AT WORK"
Fans can see their favorite photo stars here, from Bourke-White to Steichen to Weegee, but there's nothing new to recommend the genre, just the usual hubcap reflections and elongated shadows. The "Photographers at Work" prints are more interesting, highlighted by a truly scary shot of W. Eugene (Meatyard) Smith dangling from a high-rise apartment window, as if to illustrate his famous course title, "Photography Made Difficult." Through June 17. (DeLellis, 47 E. 68th St. 327-1482.)

"VESTIGES"
This show links three Japanese artists through the concepts of memento and memory. Masao Yamamoto's Joseph Cornell-like collection of small snapshots, worn from touch and "aged" with tea, is scattered all over the gallery. Viewers, in picking up and arranging the prints, become curators. Across the hall, Miyako Ishiuchi's large portraits show skin as palimpsest; the zigzagging of one sitter's panty line mocks her nearby scar. In one of Yukio Oyama's minimalist, metaphoric pictures, water runs down a set of steps toward the viewer, while the composition pushes the eye against the current and back up the steps, making it unclear whether the artist is looking ahead or back. Through June 17. (Sepia, 148 W. 24th St. 645-9444.)

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY
1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. (860-1777)—Nathan Lyons's **"Riding First Class on the Titanic."** Through June 18. ♦ James Nachtwey's **"Testimony."** Opening May 23. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10-5; Fridays, 10-8; Saturdays and Sundays, 10-6.)

Short List

SCOTT IRVINE
E3, at 47 E. 3d St. 982-0882. Through May 27.

ANDRÉ NAGGAR
Stevenson, 338 W. 23d St. 352-0070. Through June 2.

STEPHEN SHORE
303 Gallery, 525 W. 22nd St. 255-1121. Through June 3.

See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art and the Metropolitan Museum.

CLASSICAL MUSIC
ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC
At Avery Fisher Hall, Leonard Slatkin conducting. May 17 at 6:45: The remarkable Scottish musician Evelyn Glennie is the only percussionist in the world to enjoy a flourishing career as a soloist on classical stages. In this intermissionless concert, she introduces New York audiences to Michael Daugherty's "UFO" (a percussion concerto). Completing the program is Schumann's Symphony No. 3 (the "Rhenish"), offered in the revised edition prepared by Gustav Mahler in 1911. ♦ May 18-20 at 8 and May 23 at 7:30: The same program, expanded by Stravinsky's "Symphonies of Wind Instruments" and the Icelandic composer Askell Masson's Concert Piece for Snare Drum and Orchestra. ♦ May 20 at 2: Mr. Slatkin and Ms. Glennie take to the stage for a Young People's Concert. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030.)

YOUNG CONCERT ARTISTS
This organization, which for nearly four decades has demonstrated its skill at identifying exceptional talent and judiciously managing the early stages of its artists' careers, spotlights three of its current charges in concerto performances with the New York Chamber Symphony, Lawrence Leighton Smith conducting. Wendy Chen is featured in Chopin's F-Minor Piano Concerto, Naoko Shimizu in Bartók's Viola Concerto, and Anton Barachovsky in Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto in E Minor. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. May 17 at 8:30.)

SACRED MUSIC IN A SACRED SPACE
Kent Tritle is the director for a performance of Verdi's Requiem. (Church of St. Ignatius Loyola, Park Ave. at 84th St. 288-2520. May 18 at 7:30.)

ORATORIO SOCIETY OF NEW YORK
Richard Boudarham directs Mozart's Requiem, and Lyndon Woodside leads Górecki's "Miserere." (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. May 18 at 8.)

ANDRÉ RIEU
This photogenic Dutch violinist is often described as a modern-day "waltz king," a musical descendant of Johann Strauss, Jr., although Lawrence Welk might be a more apt comparison. Concerts by Rieu's orchestra usually do include a heaping plateful of Strauss, but whatever he plays, you can count on its being wrapped in layers of high-gloss kitsch. It can be hearty fun for a while, but don't go expecting more of an aesthetic fix than you would get from, say, "Riverdance." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. May 19 at 8.)

NEW YORK CHORAL SOCIETY
The chorus performs Dvořák's "Stabat Mater," with John Daly Goodwin on the podium. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. May 20 at 8.)

MET ORCHESTRA
An all-Bartók program, conducted by James Levine, comprises the Concerto for Orchestra and the opera "Bluebeard's Castle," with the latter featuring mezzo-soprano Anne Sofie von Otter and bass Samuel Ramey. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. May 21 at 3.)

THE LARK ASCENDING
The musical society presents a full staging of "The Boy from Deerfield," a new chamber opera by Martin Halpern, in a program that also includes songs by Ives, Copland, and Elodie Lauten. (St. Paul's German Evangelist Lutheran Church, 315 W. 22nd St. May 21 at 3. For information about tickets, call 741-2417.)

WESTERN WIND VOCAL ENSEMBLE
The vocal sextet performs pieces by avant-gardists of the late Renaissance (including Gesualdo and Monteverdi) and four modern composers: Lisa Bielawa, Michel Camilo, Robert Dennis, and Bobby McFerrin. (Church of St. Paul and St. Andrew, West End Ave. at 86th St. May 21 at 4. For information about tickets, call 873-2848.)

ORCHESTRA OF THE S.E.M. ENSEMBLE
Petr Kotik conducts Varèse's "Intégrales" and Boulez's "Improvisation 1 sur Mallarmé," but most of the group's concert is given over to five pieces by Earle Brown, who will assist in their performance. Born in 1926, Brown became attached in the nineteen-fifties to the circle of John Cage, Morton Feldman, and several Abstract Expressionist painters. He became best known for his advocacy of "open-form" compositions, whose graphic notation (which completely abjures the use of traditional staves, notes, and rests) blurred the line between musical composition and the visual arts. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. May 22 at 8.)

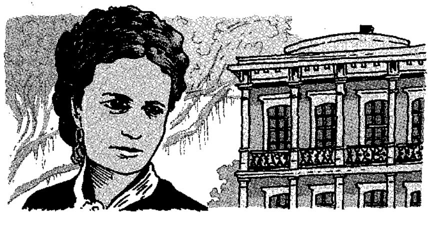
RECITALS

CHAMBER MUSIC AT THE Y
Violinists Jaime Laredo and Ida Kavafian, violists Michael Tree and Cynthia Phelps, and cellists Janos Starker and Sharon Robinson team up for a concert comprising Strauss's Sextet from "Capriccio," Mozart's G-Minor String Quintet, and Schubert's C-Major String Quintet. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. May 17 at 8.)

ALARIA CHAMBER ENSEMBLE
The players offer Beethoven's G-Major String Trio, Schumann's Piano Quartet, and Alexander Tcherepnin's G-Minor Sonata for Cello and Piano. (Weill Recital Hall. 247-7800. May 17 at 8.)

DAWN UPSHAW AND FRIENDS
The soprano is joined by tenor Gregg Edelman in a staged theatre piece involving classic popular songs

BOOK CURRENTS
A Re-Awakening



Although the hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary of Kate Chopin's birth was celebrated recently in her home town of St. Louis, where she lived most of her life, Chopin's literary roots ran deeper South. In 1870, Kate O'Flaherty married Oscar Chopin, a Creole from Natchitoches Parish, Louisiana; after a grand-tour honeymoon, the couple settled in New Orleans. Chopin was no ordinary newlywed. Often, she was spotted on long, solitary strolls along Magazine Street, smoking Cuban cigarettes. Emily Toth, in **UNVEILING KATE CHOPIN** (Mississippi), speculates that it was on such a peregrination that Chopin met Edgar Degas, another Crescent City pedestrian, and that he entertained her with stories that Chopin would later draw upon in writing her great short novel, "The Awakening."

In 1879, financial insecurity forced the Chopins to move to the small French village of Cloutierville, in northwest Louisiana, where Kate shocked the locals by riding bareback and wearing "tight-fitting" urban clothes. **KATE CHOPIN RECONSIDERED**, a collection of critical essays edited by Lynda S. Boren and Sara deSaussure Davis (Louisiana State University), shows her in a less irreverent mood. Chopin's daughter, Lélia Chopin Hattersley, describing her mother in those Cloutierville years, wrote of a "Lady Bountiful of the neighborhood, dispensing advice and counsel, medicines, and, when necessary, food to the simple people around her." It wasn't until the widowed Chopin returned to St. Louis a few years later that her Southern consciousness made its way into type. Bereft of the bayou's seductive grandeur, Chopin began, as she wrote in an essay, "groping around; looking for something big, satisfying, convincing, and finding nothing but—myself; a something neither big nor satisfying but wholly convincing."

—*Nicole LaPorte*

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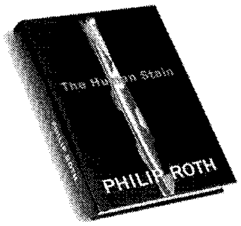

THE HUMAN STAIN

by Philip Roth

In the America of 1998, a nation contorting with sanctimonious fury, one that is on the brink of impeaching a president for sexual misconduct, classics professor Coleman Silk has lost his job over a single word. *The Human Stain* is the conclusion to Roth's remarkable trilogy of postwar American lives intertwined with the fate of the nation. (Houghton Mifflin)

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THE COLOR OF HOPE

by Susan Madison

Ruth Connelly's perfect life shatters when her son dies in a tragic accident. Now she must reassemble the pieces by extracting herself from a destructive spiral of guilt and denial, and find the courage to face her loss. (St. Martin's Press)

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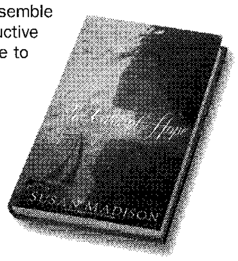

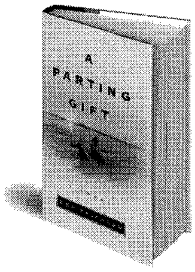

A PARTING GIFT

by Ben Erickson

Written by a carpenter from a small town in Alabama as a graduation gift for his son, this insightful first novel explores life's fundamental questions. Friendship with an eighty-four year old man helps a young sixteen year old to understand how life should be lived. (Warner Books)

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BIG CITY EYES

by Delia Ephron

Thinking life will be less complicated outside of Manhattan, Lily Davis removes herself and her teenage son to a small Long Island town. Soon, everything seems to unravel. Lily spies a naked woman sleeping in a summerhouse, a murder may have occurred and relationships are falling apart—or is Lily just looking at small-town life the wrong way through her *Big City Eyes*? (Putnam)

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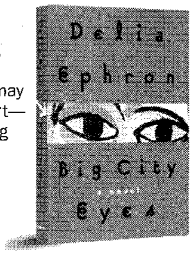

April
Sinclair
i left
my
back
door
open

I LEFT MY BACK DOOR OPEN

by April Sinclair

The award-winning author of *Coffee Will Make You Black* returns with the story of blues-playing D.J. Daphnee Dupree, who faces the far side of forty alone but with strength and plenty of wit. Daphnee has kept her back door open, just in case, and now a sexy hunk of trouble has just strolled in. (Avon Books)

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THE KIND OF LOVE THAT SAVES YOU

by Amy Yurk

Resonating with the healing power of love, this unforgettable debut is a tale of life-shattering loss and emotional resilience. Best friends Sarah and Calista have become estranged through an incomprehensible and painful twist of fate, one that sends them down different paths. Will a new relationship in Sarah's life heal the rift between them or tear them apart forever? (Bantam)

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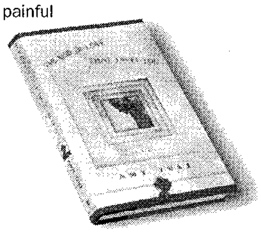

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Prices effective at store locations through 5/29/00 by Vernon Duke, Marc Blitzstein, Stephen Sondheim, and many others. (John Jay Theatre, Tenth Ave. at 58th St. May 17 and May 19-20 at 8:30. For information about tickets, call 721-6500.)

HARMONIE ENSEMBLE/NEW YORK
Several of the group's instrumentalists collaborate on an all-Copland program. (Trinity Church, Broadway at Wall St. May 18 at 1 and May 21 at 2. Admission by contribution.)

BARGEMUSIC
May 18 and May 20 at 7:30: Schumann's three piano trios. ♦ May 19 at 7:30 and May 21 at 4: Schubert's two piano trios. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-4061.)

CYGNUS ENSEMBLE
The instrumental group presents new works by David Claman, David Glaser, and Shoko Suzuki, in a recital that also includes pieces by Milton Babbitt and Lowell Liebermann. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 501-3330. May 18 at 8.)

NEW YORK FESTIVAL OF SONG
May 18 at 8: Soprano Amy Burton, tenor Theodore Green, violinist Paul Woodiel, cellist Dorothy Lawson, and pianists Michael Barrett and Steven Blier present settings of texts by Irish poets, including pieces by Beethoven, Balfe, and Britten. (Weill Recital Hall. 247-7800.) ♦ May 23 at 8: An all-Copland concert, with soprano Monique McDonald, baritone Scott Hendricks, and Mr. Barrett. (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448.)

HILDEGARD BEHRENS
Pianist Ken Noda joins the soprano to perform songs by Liszt, Wagner, Brahms, Berg, and Strauss. (Temple of Dendur, Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. May 19 at 8.)

LOCRIAN CHAMBER PLAYERS
Vocalist Joan LaBarbara is featured in her own "Snowbird's Dance, Into the Light" and Alvin Curran's "When My Feet Felt the Path That My Eyes Could Not See." Rounding out the program are pieces by György Kurtág, Frederic Rzewski, David Macdonald, and John Kreckler. (Christ Chapel, Riverside Church, 91 Claremont Ave. May 19 at 8. Tickets at the door.)

ORION STRING QUARTET
The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center is sponsoring this foursome's traversal of Beethoven's sixteen quartets, which concludes this week. May 19 at 8: The Quartets in A Major (Op. 18, No. 5) and A Minor (Op. 132). ♦ May 21 at 5: The Quartets in G Major (Op. 18, No. 2), E-Flat Major (Op. 74), and B-Flat Major (Op. 130). ♦ May 23 at 7:30: The Quartets in B-Flat Major (Op. 18, No. 6), F Minor (Op. 95), and C-Sharp Minor (Op. 131). (Alice Tully Hall. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 875-5788.)

DREW MINTER AND PAT O'BRIEN
The countertenor and the lutenist present a recital of Elizabethan lute songs. (Nour Foundation, 322 W. 108th St. May 20 at 8. For information about tickets, call 730-1316.)

MUSIC BY OSVALDO GOLIJOV
The International Bach Academy in Stuttgart commissioned the Argentine composer to write a "St. Mark Passion" to mark the two-hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary of Bach's death. Selections from the new piece will receive their first hearing in this concert, which will include comments from the composer. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 501-3330. May 20 at 9.)

"SUNDAYS ON THE ISLAND"
This way-uptown series, held weekly in the parlor or in an outbuilding of a bed-and-breakfast in New York City's maritime community, reaches its eighth birthday this week. Soprano Chen Reiss joins an ensemble of eight cellos to perform Villa-Lobos's "Bachianas Brasileiras No. 5" in a celebratory concert that also includes that composer's "Bachianas Brasileiras No. 1," as well as several works by Bach. (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. 718-885-2478. May 21 at noon.)

MATTHIAS GOERNE
The German baritone performs songs by Schumann and Wolf, with pianist Eric Schneider assisting. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. May 21 at 2.)

PENDERECKI STRING QUARTET
The foursome, founded in Poland in 1981 and now in residence at Wilfrid Laurier University in Ontario, performs quartets by Mozart (in D Minor, K. 421) and Szymanowski (his Second), as well as Julius Zarebski's G-Minor Piano Quintet. (Kosciuszko Foundation, 15 E. 65th St. 734-2130. May 21 at 3.)

The Manhattan Cup Catch and Release Striped Bass Derby (see Above and Beyond).

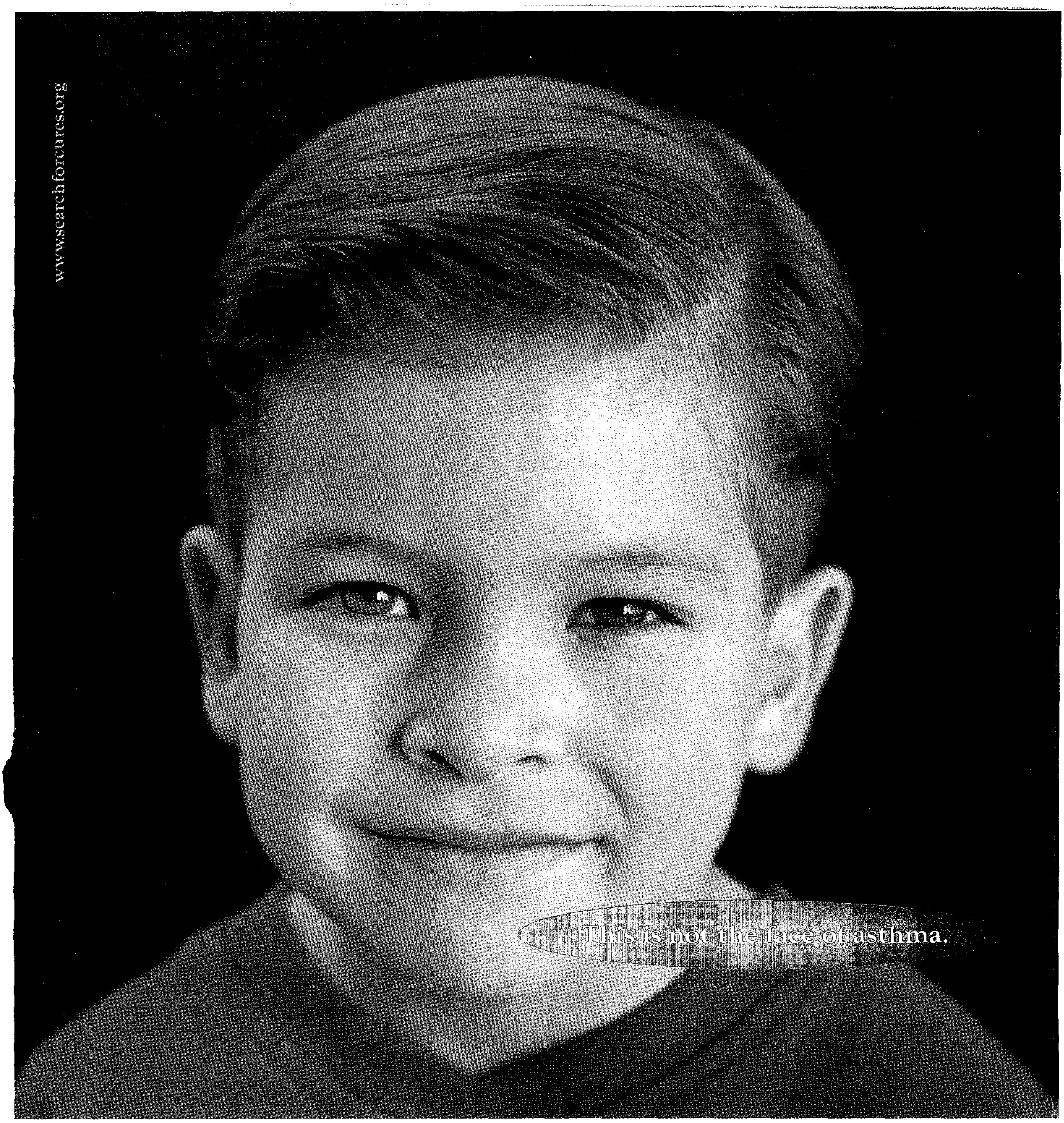
RICCARDO VECCHIO

ABOVE AND BEYOND

THE REEL SPORT
New Yorkers are accustomed to pin-striped figures arriving each spring in the Bronx, but the Yankees aren't the only creatures with proud markings to make an appearance here this time of year. The season also brings millions of striped bass to New York Harbor on their annual spawning run, and, thanks to environmental restrictions enacted over the past quarter century, recent runs have been enormous. On May 19 at 1:30, some thirty guided boats will embark from the Chelsea Piers for the second annual Manhattan Cup Catch and Release Striped Bass Derby. Though guides will plot courses for such hot spots as Raritan Bay, off Staten Island, and Jamaica Bay, in Queens, there will also be those who linger right in the harbor, amid the wakes of barges, tugs, and tankers. And with good reason—last year's winner hooked a forty-four-inch fish just off the Statue of Liberty. For more information, call the Manhattan Chapter of the Coastal Conservation Association, at 718-945-2255.

READINGS
May 17 at 7: Actors Mia Dillon, Linda Hunt, and David Margulies read stories by Mary Robison, Richard Yates, and Bernard Malamud. Jules Feiffer, Amy Hempel, and Rick Moody will introduce the readers. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400.) ♦ May 18 at 6:30: By poet Karl Kirchwey, from his work. (Foundation for Hellenic Culture, 7 W. 57th St. For reservations, which are required, call 308-6908.) ♦ May 22 at 7: By Peter Gadol and Anndee Hochman, from their fiction. (Housing Works Used Book Café, 126 Crosby St. No tickets necessary.)

TALKS
May 18 at 7:30: Critic Harold Bloom discusses his latest book, "How to Read and Why." (Barnes & Noble, 33 E. 17th St. No tickets necessary.) ♦ May 23 at 7: Jazz writer Gary Giddins talks about Bing Crosby and Louis Armstrong. (Kaplan Penthouse, Rose Building, 165 W. 65th St. 721-6500.)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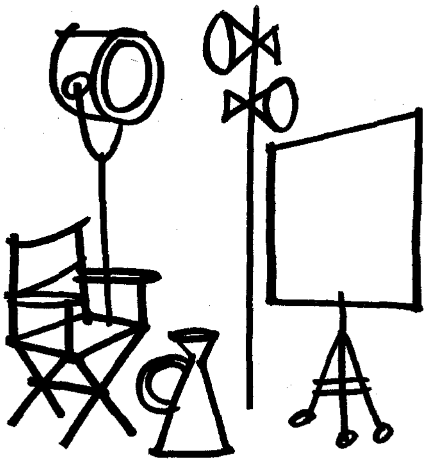


MOVIES OPENING

DINOSAUR
A computer-animated adventure story from Disney, about a young dinosaur who is raised by a clan of lemurs. Opening May 19.

THE HISTORY OF LUMINOUS MOTION
Bette Gordon directs this coming-of-age drama about a fifteen-year-old boy (Eric Lloyd) and his alcoholic mother (Deborah Kara Unger), who leave a life on the road to settle in New Jersey. Opening May 19.

ROAD TRIP
College buddies race across the country to retrieve an incriminating videotape, in this comedy with MTV's Tom Green. Opening May 19.

SMALL TIME CROOKS
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening May 19.

SPIKE AND MIKE'S ANIMATION FESTIVAL
A feature-length collection of "sick and twisted" cartoons. Opening May 19. (Quad Cinema.)

THE WELL
A psychological drama by Samantha Lang, in which two Australian women accidentally run over a drifter with their car. Opening May 19. (The Screening Room.)

YOUNG DR. FREUD
The early life of Freud as a struggling medical student, as imagined by director Alex Corti. In German. Opening May 19. (Film Forum.)

FILM NOTES

If a movie has been reviewed recently in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given.

AMERICAN PSYCHO
Bret Easton Ellis's infamous novel, a wicked distillation of the nineteen-eighties, has finally made it to the screen; that audiences should laugh so freely at the result is an equally telling footnote to our own times. Christian Bale plays Patrick Bateman—serial killer, Wall Street whiz, and a snob so gripped by status symbols that he hyperventilates at the sight of a business card more finely printed than his own. The director, Mary Harron, shows us little of Bateman's office life, and we need more; it's a question not just of period detail but of the vital bond between his night work and his day job—between the dismemberment of corpses and the dismantling of corporations. Yet there is much to dazzle and distress here: Harron lights and arranges her characters—especially Bateman's friends—like gleaming humanoids, as if he is not alone in yielding to forces far more potent than himself. Bale is smooth and sinister; the actresses around him—Chloë Sevigny, Cara Seymour, and Samantha Mathis—seem pale and defeated by comparison, as if they know themselves to be doomed. Apart from a spree with a chainsaw, the violence of the book has been sharply toned down, (you could hardly tone it up), and some of the killing has turned into cold, outrageous comedy, with Bateman explaining his penchant for Whitney Houston and Genesis to bemused victims. With a record collection like that, he was lucky not to get it in the neck himself.—*Anthony Lane* (4/17/00) (59th Street East Cinema, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, 19th Street East 6, and Village Theatre VII.)

BATTLEFIELD EARTH
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (Coronet Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Metro Cinema 1 and 2, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.)

THE CHASE
Marlon Brando as the sheriff of a corrupt, bloodlusting Texas town in the mythical America of liberal sadomasochistic fantasies. Many people all over the world blame Texas for the assassination of Kennedy—as if the murder had boiled up out of the unconscious of the people there—and this 1966 film exploits and confirms this hysterical view, going so far as to provide a facsimile of Jack Ruby's shooting of Oswald, with a racist, who is, of course, a white, Gentile Southerner, as a substitute for Ruby, and a totally innocent hero (Robert Redford) as a substitute for Oswald. The producer, Sam Spiegel, said that it was about "the consequences of affluence," and it does suggest "La Dolce Vita" on the range. Lillian Hellman wrote the screenplay, and she publicly expressed her dissatisfaction with the results. It was generally acknowledged that the director, Arthur Penn, didn't have artistic control over the production. But the picture affects some people very strongly, and it has a considerable reputation, especially in Europe.—*Pauline Kael* (BAM Rose Cinemas; May 21.)

CROUPIER
A slight and streamlined bauble from British director Mike Hodges (who did "Get Carter"), about a writer (played to stony perfection by Clive Owen) who takes a job as a roulette dealer, aiming, in the process, to write a best-seller about his experiences. The plot revolves around the big chance he takes when he rescues a mysterious woman (Alex Kingston of "ER") from a life-threatening gambling debt. The lean and twisted screenplay—nobody is what he seems—gives Hodges ample time to play with doppelgängers, duplicity, and lots of mirrors. The sombre turns of the story and low-key performances are a welcome reminder that taut moviemaking (where violence erupts unchoreographed) can be as exciting as fast-paced editing and scorching pyrotechnics.—*Bruce Diones* (First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Quad Cinema, and State.)

FREQUENCY
A sentimental fantasy by director Gregory Hoblit which wants to be the mother of all father-son movies. This story of an adult son (James Caviezel) who communicates via ham radio with his long-dead dad (Dennis Quaid) has all the appropriate Twilight Zone twists. When the son warns his father of his soon-to-be accidental death, Dad takes the advice and survives, and their lives change (not for the better). Hoblit's camera lingers on the actors' faces, and the aggressively emotional performances feel authentic; the film's blatant heart-tugging is earned. The plot, however, about a serial killer who eludes capture because history's been altered (and the pursuit by father and son to bring him to justice), has major-league logic flaws, even for a time-travel picture ("Time Bandits" made more sense). Still, the film moves along at an entertaining clip (thanks to Hoblit's "Hill Street Blues" experience), and there are worse things than a sappy, well-acted thriller.—*B.D.* (Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema 3rd Avenue, East 86th Street, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Union Square, and Waverly.)

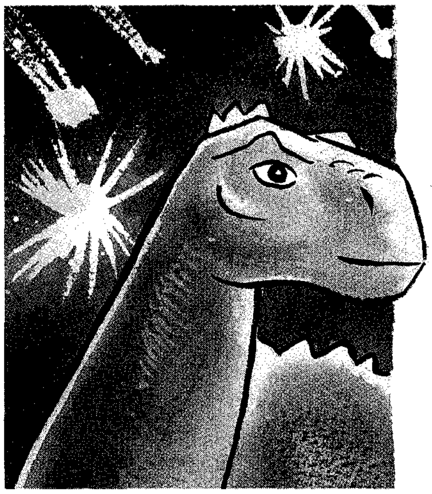
GLADIATOR
It's been many years since movie screens clanged with Roman history; directors are rightly cautious about trying to reconcile the drama of martial valor with the sight of men in short metal skirts. In the hands of Ridley Scott, however, the Empire strikes back; his new picture is strong and stirring, almost to a fault. Russell Crowe plays Maximus, a Roman general so victorious in battle and so popular with his troops that the incoming emperor, Commodus (Joaquin Phoenix), decides within minutes to have him killed. Maximus escapes but winds up in slavery, under the rheumy eye of Proximo (the late Oliver Reed). His prowess established in the arena, our hero returns to the Coliseum to perform his final act of revenge. The simplicity of the plot feels right; whenever the movie strays into complexity—as in the dealings between Commodus and his sister (Connie Nielsen)—it founders and slows. What you want is the games, and Scott delivers them avidly, complete with unfed tigers. The emotional and political aftertaste of the film is another matter; the way in which it encourages a lust for blood and a rage for the restoration of order will not bear much examination. When in Rome, however, you might as well cheer like the Romans. With Richard Harris, implausibly, as Marcus Aurelius.—*A.L.* (5/8/00) (Art Greenwich Twin, Astor Plaza, Chelsea Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, New York Twin, Olympia I and II, Orpheum VII, Union Square, and Ziegfeld.)

HAMLET
In this modern-dress version, the black towers of Times Square, fretted with neon, tessellated with ledges, balconies, and catwalks, make a sinister and eloquent setting for the power struggles within the Denmark Corporation. The bedraggled Hamlet (Ethan Hawke), a slacker in a knit cap, recites "To be or not to be" in a video store and washes Polonius's blood-soaked clothes in a laundromat. Yet this version of the world's most popular play is certainly not a travesty. Michael Almereyda, a young veteran of the New York independent scene, has developed his own form of visual poetry among the corporate settings and video screens, and many of the translations into contemporaneity are both witty and oddly right. Hawke is a depressed and adolescent Hamlet: it's not a noble or heroic interpretation (he is unimaginable as any kind of leader), but he doesn't cross the border into self-pity, and, in the end, the emotional power of the old play comes through. With Kyle MacLachlan as the viciously happy C.E.O., Claudius; Diane Venora, much aroused by her new husband, as Gertrude; Bill Murray as Polonius; Liev Schreiber as Laertes; Sam Shepard as the Ghost; and Julia Stiles as Ophelia, a tense Manhattan girl with a weakness for corporate reflecting pools and waterfalls. Music by Carter Burwell. Cinematography by John de Borman.—*David Denby* (5/15/00) (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

HIGH FIDELITY
A short, sharp movie from Stephen Frears, who may be trying to shake himself awake after the languors of his last film, "The Hi-Lo Country." The source is Nick Hornby's buoyant novel, which was set in North London, but the shift to Chicago feels easy, perhaps because difficulties with girls and a penchant for listing favorite pop songs are universal symptoms of male haplessness. John Cusack stars as Rob, who runs a ratty record store called Championship Vinyl; if anything, the records are more tightly packed in his apartment, which may be why his girlfriend Laura (Iben Hjejle) has just moved out. For most of the picture, they duck and weave, unable to decide whether to stay together; not much happens, and, like Laura, you want things to move on. Yet Frears keeps jump-starting the action with fast cuts, flashbacks, and a jolting current of loud music. (The end credits, which roll to a Stevie Wonder song, send you out on a high.) Why Frears made the film so dark and rain-drenched is something of a mystery; perhaps he was seeking a visual match for the glumness of perpetual adolescence. No love, the film ruefully suggests, will ever be as much fun as a good love song. Fortunately, Cusack and the rest of the cast—notably Jack Black, as a noxious compound of slob and snob—insist, like all good discophiles, on hearing both sides.—*A.L.* (4/3/00) (Cinema I, Criterion Center, Empire 25, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and Village East Cinemas.)

KEEPING THE FAITH
In New York, two boyhood friends now in their thirties—a young, aggressively modernizing rabbi (Ben Stiller) and a quiet, traditional priest (Edward

Norton)—fall in love with the woman (Jenna Elfman) they loved as a girl years before. The story of this romantic comedy, concocted by Norton and a college friend, Stuart Blumberg, may be movie-ish, even gimmicky, but scene by scene the film plays well, sometimes extremely well, with lots of goofy and charming detail. In particular, Jenna Elfman has a radiant glow. As a grownup, she's a tough corporate executive with an earnest and soulful side—Jean Arthur may have a successor after all. In his first directorial effort, Norton, an intense young actor, shows a flare for romantic longing and an appreciation of the landscapes and moods of Manhattan. Look for a good running joke about a trading-card series called "Heroes of the Torah"—Jews in dark hats and beards who have been placed on collectors' cards like ballplayers.—*D.D.* (4/24 & 5/1/00) (Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema II, East 86th Street Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema 1 and 2, and Village Theatre VII.)



An iguanodon named Aladar stars in Disney's new animated film, "Dinosaur."

MARCELLUS HALL

MICHAEL JORDAN TO THE MAX
At the end of this forty-five-minute IMAX valentine, Michael Jordan declares: "There *will* be a player better than me," but he doesn't really believe it, and neither does the audience. After viewing highlight upon highlight, you become convinced that Jordan didn't so much play basketball as bend the game to his will. The film follows the championship march of the Bulls through the 1998 playoffs, interspersed with his Airness's basic biography: North Carolina, N.B.A. stardom, Nike marketing juggernaut, etc. It's a glossy portrait, without blemish or nuance. There's no mention of intra-team conflicts, or any kind of utterance other than the standard sports-cliché stoicism. What the film does do well is place you courtside and then blast out your eardrums—a dribbling basketball apparently produces a titanic thunder. Noise aside, the spectacle of a seven-story Jordan elevating, double-pumping, and then swishing his jump shot should certainly thrill his legion of fans.—*Michael Agger* (Lincoln Square.)

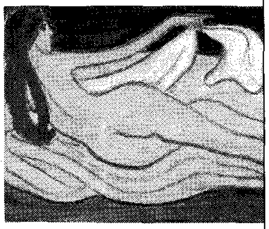
THE SORROW AND THE PITY
A magnificent documentary epic on the German Occupation of France. Directed by Marcel Ophuls, this study in the psychology of invasion makes us ask what we and our friends and families would actually have done if our country had been invaded, like France. It's both oral history and essay: people who lived through the German Occupation tell us what they did during that catastrophic period, and we see and hear evidence that corroborates or corrects or sometimes flatly contradicts them. What makes the film innovative is the immediate annotation of what has just been said. As the perspectives ramify, we begin to get a fuller sense of what it was like to participate in the moral dream of an occupied nation than we have ever had. Released in 1970.—*P.K.* (Film Forum.)

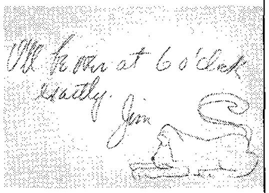
TIME CODE
Mike Figgis's new feature is a film that will launch a thousand theses. He splits the screen into four quadrants, and each section shows a continuous ninety-three-minute take, shot in synchronized real time with four handheld digital cameras. The big new idea is that the audience must construct the narrative by "privileging" certain parts of the "text," but if you've ever stood in front of a bank of televisions you've probably already gone beyond montage. Figgis knows he's being pretentious, and he cleverly undercuts this with self-aware asides and frequent comic interludes. The cameras track separate characters who all end up at the same place: an independent film company called Red Mullet Productions. Some quadrants fare better than others: Jeanne Tripplehorn spends most of the film agonizing in her limo, and, thankfully, doesn't require much attention. Saffron Burrows visits her shrink, but she's hardly given any sound, and her story languishes. Stellan Skarsgård is superb as the alcoholic, visionary head of the film company, and it's his affair with Salma Hayek which creates the fireworks—as they couple, so do their screens. It's hard work being a postmodern voyeur, but it's a lot more fun than it sounds.—*M.A.* (Angelika Film Center, Chelsea West, 84th Street Sixplex, and Lincoln Square.)

U-571
A lovably traditional and competent submarine action movie. In 1942, an American crew with Bill Paxton as the skipper and Matthew McConaughey as the executive officer undertakes to steal an Enigma coding machine from a wounded German U-boat. Much of the plot is given over to the submarine-warfare tropes that have served movies well for sixty years: the testing of a young officer (McConaughey) in combat, the terror of life below during a depth-charge attack by a German destroyer, the single functioning torpedo that has to be aimed perfectly, and so on. But the director, Jonathan Mostow, who showed a talent for shot-by-shot continuity and suspense in his first film, "Breakdown" (1997), demonstrates even greater skill here, and one is caught up in the impossible feats, rescues, and attacks. With disciplined performances by Harvey Keitel, Jake Weber, Jon Bon Jovi, Jack Noseworthy, and many others. Screenplay by Mostow, Sam Montgomery, and David Ayer.—*D.D.* (5/15/00) (Chelsea Cinemas, Coronet Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Orpheum VII, Union Square, and Waverly.)

UP AT THE VILLA
The new film by Phillip and Belinda Haas ("Angels and Insects") plays as smoothly as aged wine, but the material, adapted from a Somerset Maugham novella, substitutes worldliness for drama, and the Haases seem not to realize that there's something wrong with that. Visiting the Anglo-American expatriate community in Florence in 1938, a beautiful young English widow, Mary Panton (Kristin Scott Thomas), has to choose among three lovers: a buttoned-up-tight British aristocrat and diplomat (James Fox) who is much older than she, a young and penniless Austrian refugee (Jeremy Davies) who is given to self-dramatizing poses, and an American playboy (Sean Penn) who has a taste for danger and truly loves her. Should Mary choose comfort or excitement? This is a question that requires glamour, wit, and perhaps melodramatic excitement, not glum refinement. The Haases treat Maugham's skillfully wrought kitsch as if it were sombre moral exploration; they take the fun out of it without achieving anything serious. With Anne Bancroft in a poorly written role as a cynical American married to a fabulously wealthy Italian prince. Shot outside Siena, in a gorgeous estate doubling for a Florentine villa.—*D.D.* (5/15/00) (Angelika Film Center, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

THE VIRGIN SUICIDES
Sofia Coppola's directorial début is a seventies period piece about five blond suicidal sisters (the Lisbons) and the young men who love them. It's hard to brighten suicide, and even harder to make it funny and mysterious at the same time, and this adaptation of Jeffrey Eugenides' novel veers awkwardly between comedy and fable. Coppola concentrates mostly on re-creating the mood of the





SWANN
AUCTIONS

(detail)
Christian Rohlfs,
"Liegender Frauen
Akt," watercolor
and gouache
on paper, 1911.
At auction June 7.

James Thurber,
Autograph Note.
At auction June 8.

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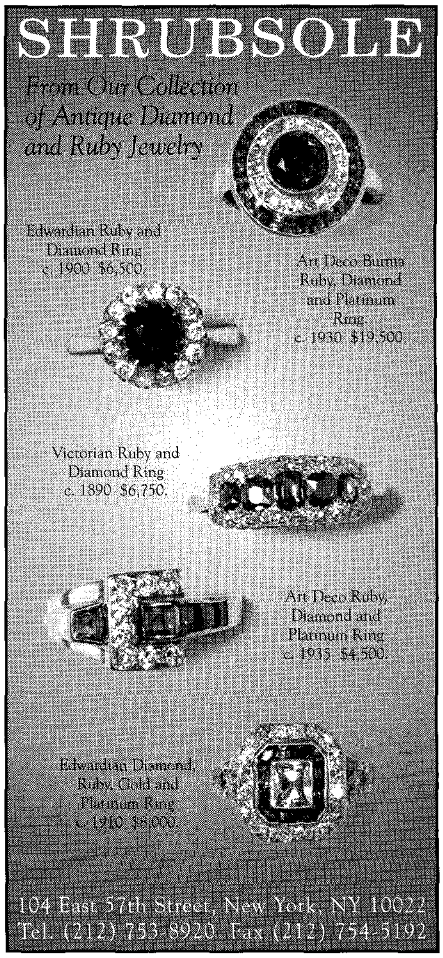

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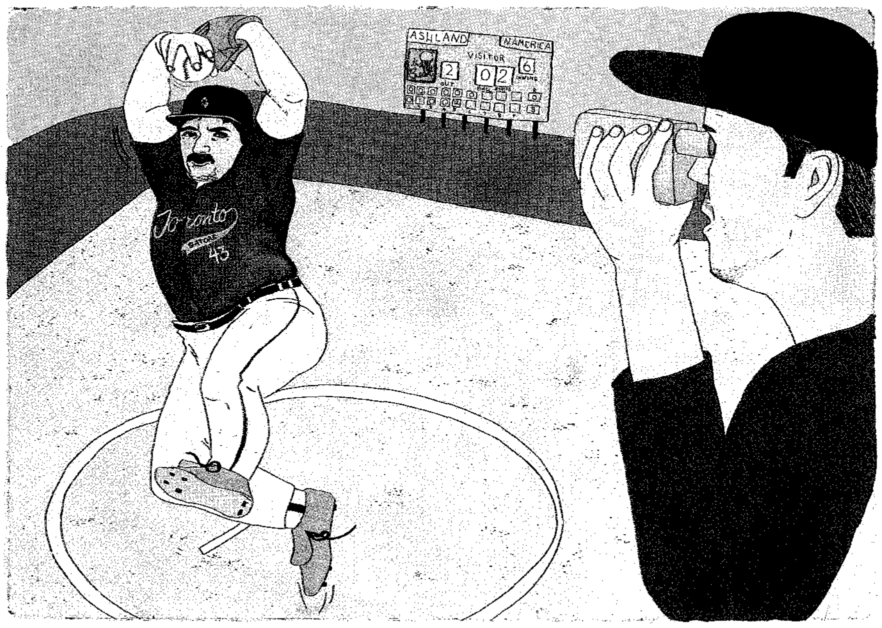
book: the fantastic intensity of adolescence, when certain girls (and the desperate acts they inspire) can acquire the status of legend. We are told of the unravelling of the sisters from the boys' perspective (Giovanni Ribisi does the narration), but the film comes most alive when it goes inside the girls' hothouse environment: the handwritten notes, purple-inked doodles, and slumber-party décor are rendered perfectly. James Woods and Kathleen Turner turn in terrifyingly accurate performances as the overprotective Catholic parents of the Lisbon clan, but the overall atmosphere doesn't seem menacing enough: is being forced to burn your favorite "Kiss" album really reason to end it all?—*M.A.* (Chelsea Cinemas, East 86th Street Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, and Village Theatre VII.)



MAGIC EYE *The digital camera may be the most versatile documentary device since the pencil, and it has led to an explosion of the form. Much of this work never gets shown in theatres, but every other month, the Film Society of Lincoln Center showcases an independent documentary. The latest installment, screening on May 18, is Jeremy Spear's "Fastpitch," a first-person account of the hard-core variation of softball, whose premier player is an Ojibwa Indian pitcher named Darren Zack.*

LARA TOMLIN

ALSO PLAYING

CENTER STAGE
Kips Bay Theatre, 19th Street East 6, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 64th and 2nd, and Village East Cinemas.

EAST-WEST
BAM Rose Cinemas and Paris.

I DREAMED OF AFRICA
Chelsea West, 42nd Street E Walk, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, and Union Square.

SCREWED
Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Murray Hill Cinemas, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, and Union Square.

THEATRE ADDRESSES

Unless noted, call 777-FILM for show times.

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
BAM Rose Cinemas, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-623-2770).
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.
Cinema I, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema II, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema 3rd Avenue, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St. (924-3363).
Coronet Cinemas, Third Ave. at 59th St.
Criterion Center, Broadway at 44th St.
East 85th Street, First Ave. at 85th St.
East 86th Street Cinemas, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Eastside Playhouse, Third Ave. at 55th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
Empire 25, 42nd St. near Eighth Ave. (398-3939).
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
42nd Street E Walk, 42nd St. near Eighth Ave.
Gotham Cinema, Third Ave. at 58th St.
Kips Bay Theatre, Second Ave. at 32nd St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St.
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
Metro Cinema 1 and 2, Broadway at 99th St.
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 67th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Olympia I and II, Broadway at 107th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St. (688-3800).
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th St.
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
The Screening Room, 54 Varick St. (334-2100).
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
State, Broadway at 45th St.
Sutton 1 and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
Union Square, Broadway at 13th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Waverly 1 and 2, Sixth Ave. at 3rd St.
Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between Eighth and Ninth Aves.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE
35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—The films of director Alan Rudolph. May 20 at 2: "Choose Me" (1984). ♦ May 20 at 4:15: "Welcome to L.A." (1976). ♦ May 21 at 2: "Remember My Name" (1978). ♦ May 21 at 4: "Trouble in Mind" (1985).

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES
32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5110)—May 17 at 8: "American Intellectuals" (1998, Paige Taylor). ♦ May 18 at 8:30: "Serene Velocity" (1970, Ernie Gehr) and "Still" (1971, Gehr). ♦ May 19 at 7: "La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc" (1927-28, Carl Dreyer; in French). ♦ May 20 at 9:30: "Michael" (1924, Dreyer; in Danish). ♦ May 21 at 7:30: "Tom, Tom, the Piper's Son" (1969, Ken Jacobs).

BAM ROSE CINEMAS
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-623-2770)—All show times are at 4:30, 7, and 9:30 unless otherwise noted. May 18: "Laura" (1944, Otto Preminger). ♦ May 19: "The Last Supper" (1976, Tomás Gutiérrez Alea; in Spanish). ♦ May 20: "The Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover" (1990, Peter Greenaway). ♦ May 21: "The Chase" (†). ♦ May 22: "Genet à Chatila" (1999, Richard Dindo; in French). ♦ May 23: "Tilai" (1990, Issa Ouedraogo; in Mooré).

FILM FORUM
W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—The films of Clara Bow. May 22 at 1, 5, and 9: "Wings" (1927, William Wellman). ♦ May 22 at 3:30 and 7:30: "Dancing Mothers" (1926, Herbert Brenon).

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—May 18 at 6: "State of Dogs" (1998, Peter Brosens and Dorjkhandyn Turmunkh; in Mongolian). ♦ "Home Movies," a retrospective. May 19 at 7:30: "Futility" (1992, Greta Snider) and "To Catch a Glimpse" (1997, Jean Carlomusto). ♦ May 20 at 2: "Porch Glider" (1970, James Herbert), "Mr. Kenneth Marvin's Wedding" (1914), "Mom and Dad's Wedding April 23, 1938" (1938), and "Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., Home Movie" (1940). ♦ Films from the Library of Congress. May 21 at 2: "The Treasure of the Sierra Madre" (1948, John Huston). ♦ May 23 at 6: "Hail the Conquering Hero" (1944, Preston Sturges).

MUSEUM OF TELEVISION AND RADIO
25 W. 52nd St. (621-6800)—A festival of documentary television, with the filmmakers present at each screening. May 17 at 6: "Pop" (1999, Joel Meyerowitz). ♦ May 18 at 6: "Brian Wilson: A Beach Boy's Tale" (1999, Morgan Neville). ♦ May 19 at 6: "Sam Phillips: The Man Who Invented Rock 'n' Roll" (2000, Neville). ♦ May 20 at 2: "Nova: Submarines, Secrets, and Spies" (1999, Robert Whittlesey). ♦ May 20 at 4:30: "Dying to Tell the Story" (1998, Kyra Thompson).

SYMPHONY SPACE
2537 Broadway (864-1414)—Films from Africa. May 23 at 7: "Clando" (1996, Jean-Marie Téno; in French). ♦ May 23 at 8:45: "Xala" (1974, Ousmane Sembene; in Wolof and French).

WALTER READE THEATRE
Lincoln Center (875-5600)—A celebration of Burt Lancaster. May 17 at 1 and 6: "Birdman of Alcatraz" (1962, John Frankenheimer). ♦ May 17 at 3:45 and 8:45: "Local Hero" (1983, Bill Forsyth). ♦ Independents Night. May 18 at 6:30: "Fastpitch" (1999, Jeremy Spear). ♦ Through June 1: The Sixth African Film Festival. Highlights listed here. May 19 at 7:30: "Mossane" (1996, Safi Faye; in Wolof). ♦ May 19 at 9:45: "Bye Bye Africa" (1998, Mahamat Saleh Haroun; in Chadian and French). ♦ May 20 at 4:30: "Fragments of Life" (1999, François L. Woukoache; in French). ♦ May 20 at 7: "A Trip to the Country" (2000, Jean-Marie Téno; in Bamileke and French). ♦ May 20 at 9:15: "TGV" (1997, Mousse Touré; in Wolof and French). ♦ May 22 at 6: "Aristotle's Plot" (1996, Jean-Pierre Békolo; in French).

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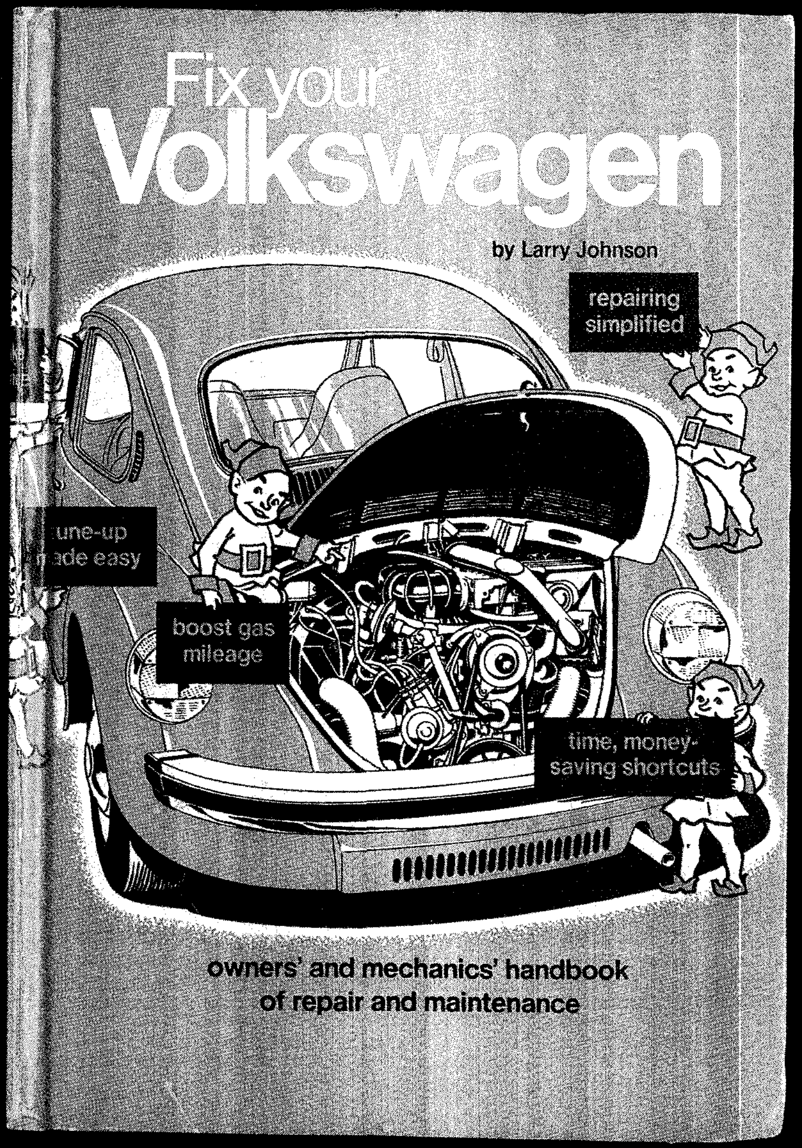
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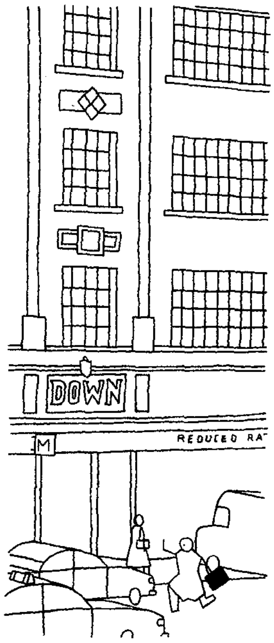
THE
NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

COMMENT

THE LONG AFTERMATH OF A SHORT WAR

A hundred and eighty years after the storming of the Bastille, Henry Kissinger famously asked Mao's comrade and deputy Zhou Enlai whether he thought the French Revolution had been a success. Zhou is said to have replied, "It's too soon to tell." It always is, somehow. The most basic facts of every modern cataclysm from the Bolshevik coup in 1917 to the fall of Saigon in 1975—to say nothing of their deeper meanings—are still subject to fierce debate. By contrast, the Persian Gulf War, in which, a decade ago, the United States and its allies expelled Iraqi occupiers from Kuwait, lingers in memory as a curiously uncomplicated event. We remember the well-scripted briefings on CNN, the brilliant light show in the night sky over Baghdad, the silent videotapes of perfectly aimed "smart bombs" slamming into their desert targets, the heroic homecoming. And yet, as any experienced soldier will tell you, warfare is terrible, ineffable, and bewildering, and never morally simple. Soldiers speak of "the fog of war"—the disorienting confusion of battle so infinitely less tidy than the arrows and rectangles on the maps of briefers and historians. In Kuwait and Iraq, the fog was especially thick—in a way, deliberately so. The United States government, in its determination to avoid the chaos and protest of Vietnam, controlled reporters' access to the Gulf battlefield to an unprecedented degree. Some journalists were escorted in groups to sites selected by the Pentagon; many more, to their dismay, found themselves forced to do their reporting from briefing rooms in Saudi Arabia and the Pentagon, where they heard the same news conferences and watched the same videotapes that we did at home. Nor did the thoroughness and speed of the Allied victory encourage many second thoughts. So, short as the ground war was—just one hundred hours—much about it remains unexplained.



Seymour M. Hersh has spent the last six months reviewing the Gulf War and, in particular, the actions of the 24th Infantry Division (Mechanized) under the command of Major General Barry McCaffrey, a charismatic and accomplished officer whose numerous decorations included three Purple Hearts and two Distinguished Service Crosses. In 1996, McCaffrey, by then a four-star general, was appointed by President Clinton to be the director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, a Cabinet-level position, and retired from the Army. As "drug czar," McCaffrey is the architect of the government's $1.6-billion plan to help the Colombians quash the production and export of narcotics.

In Iraq, General McCaffrey led the 24th Infantry Division in an epic "left hook" tank drive, designed to shut off an Iraqi retreat from Kuwait. He and his troops won extraordinary praise for a four-day march under bleak conditions. Hersh, however, in the course of conducting hundreds of interviews and reviewing thousands of pages of government and Army documents, found a number of operations by men under McCaffrey's command that are, at a minimum, unsettling. His detailed account, published here this week, describes how, on March 2, 1991—two days after the declaration of a cease-fire, when Iraqi forces were in flight—McCaffrey attacked a line of retreating

LAURENT CILLUFFO

Iraqi vehicles and troops, unleashing an assault that lasted several hours and was all but uncontested. In testimony before the Senate and in written answers to questions from Hersh (whose repeated requests for an interview were declined), McCaffrey said that his men were fired on and he had no choice but to respond in force—with the full might of his division. Many military men have supported General McCaffrey's version of events, but many officers and enlisted men who have talked to Hersh for the record say either that there was no Iraqi fire at all or that there was so little, and of such minor consequence, that it hardly warranted the onslaught—and bloodshed—that followed. The question is one of proportionality: Did an Army general (who is now, as it happens, in the President's Cabinet) go too far?

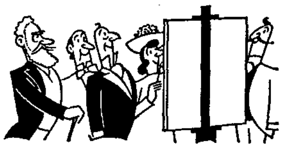
In another incident, officers and troops in the 24th Division told Hersh that on February 27th soldiers opened fire on unarmed prisoners near a hospital bus. (General McCaffrey was not on the scene.) American forces in the Gulf treated thousands of prisoners properly, but, in this case, Hersh's reporting raises the question of whether the official record accurately reflects what occurred.

Both the Criminal Investigation Division of the Army and the Inspector General's office looked into various complaints against the 24th Division command and concluded that there had been no wrongdoing. There is no doubt that the investigators conducted many interviews and produced an enormous report, but, as Hersh establishes, crucial witnesses were overlooked, compelling arguments set aside. Clearly, further investigation is necessary.

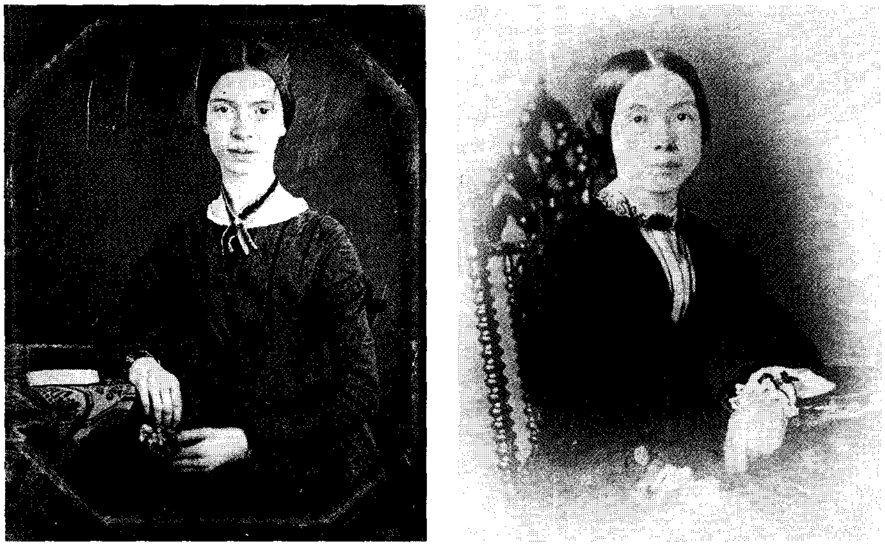
One of the most moving aspects of Hersh's account is the number of soldiers who felt it necessary to step forward and talk about the Gulf War. This was not an easy decision. Some are still in the military and conceivably risk their careers; some are retired and still feel a profound sense of disillusionment. For all of them, speaking publicly now is a matter of calling the official record into question—but not only that. For them, it is a matter of honor to speak freely, just as it was to serve.

—*David Remnick*

ANNALS OF EBAY
A NEW KODAK MOMENT WITH EMILY DICKINSON?



It is well known among fans of American poetry that there is only one documented photograph of Emily Dickinson—a daguerreotype showing her at about seventeen, thin and dark, with an overbite and a serious expression. This fact is, understandably enough, less well known among aficionados of Hungarian poetry, a category that Janos Novomeszky falls into. It helps explain why Novomeszky, a photography collector who moved to this country from Budapest ten years ago, put up for sale on eBay last month an albumen print marked on the back with the name of Emily Dickinson, and was willing to accept a trifling opening bid of twenty-four dollars. "It has sort of been an accident," he said last week. The beneficiary of that accident was Philip Gura, a professor of American literature and culture at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Gura placed a last-minute bid of four hundred and eighty-one dollars and ended up being the possessor of a slightly faded photograph of a dark-haired, dark-eyed woman with an overbite who may or may not be the poet in her early thirties, at the height of her creativity, when she was turning out an average of a poem a day.



The teen-age Emily Dickinson, and a purported photo of the poet in her thirties.

AMHERST COLLEGE ARCHIVES, SPECIAL COLLECTIONS (LEFT)

Although Gura is careful to point out that the photograph is only suspected to be of Dickinson, he sounds about as persuaded of its inauthenticity as an arresting officer is of the innocence of the burglar he's just caught shinnying down a drainpipe. There is a link on Gura's Web site labelled "Newsflash: Newly Discovered Emily Dickinson Photograph," and, speaking on the phone last week, he said, "The real magic of it is that I realize I am the first person since the nineteen-forties who has been able to know what she looked like as an adult"—the nineteen-forties being the years after which any near-contemporary of Dickinson would be dead. "There is almost an occult feeling when you look at her," he added. Peter Nelson, the curator of special collections at the Jones Library, in Amherst, Massachusetts, says the new picture is visually persuasive. "My first reaction was 'Wow!' " he said.

Proving that the photograph depicts Amherst's most famous daughter will be tricky, however. Gura has engaged a forensic anthropologist to measure the two faces and see whether the features match. (The older Emily has chubbier cheeks than the younger one, and her nose seems slightly narrower.) Then there is the inscription on the back of the print, in period handwriting, that Gura reads as "Emily Dickinson—/died/rec 1886." He intends to compare the handwriting with the autographs of people whom Dickinson knew. The "rec," he speculates, may be short for "received," which is a common way of indicating when a picture joined a collection; on first glance, though, the word looks more like "Dec," which would make sense had Dickinson died in December, instead of May, 1886.

The photograph itself holds other clues. Gura is researching portraits by Amherst and Boston photographers of the era, to see whether any of them include the distinctive carved chair in which the supposed Dickinson sits. Gura thinks the sitter is wearing around her neck a pair of dark glasses on a cord, of the kind that may have been prescribed for Dickinson when she went to Boston for ophthalmological treatment, which would date the image to the eighteen-sixties. A scholar of dress has judged that the clothes worn in the photograph would have been fifteen years out of date in 1865; but that, Gura says, only points again to Dickinson, since she was known to dress in a style behind the times.

If the image is genuine, it would be of inestimable value to Dickinson scholars, but its monetary value is hard to estimate, according to Chris Mahoney, of Sotheby's photography department. Suspected photographs of famous Americans do not do well at auction, he says, and Sotheby's is reluctant to offer for sale any photograph that does not have a documented provenance. (There are exceptions. In 1996, an undocumented daguerreotype of the unmistakable Frederick Douglass went for a hundred and eighty-four thousand dollars at auction.) The origins of the Gura photograph are obscure: Novomeszky says that he came by it in a job lot of photographs that were rejects from a dealer in Los Angeles named Stephen White. White doesn't recognize the photograph but concedes that it's possible he once owned it and overlooked its significance. "I'm kind of astounded," he said. In any case, Gura has no immediate plans to sell the picture. "I think I am going to keep it and enjoy it for a while, and probably end up writing about her," he said. Meanwhile, one of Gura's departmental colleagues has already found a use for the image, pleasingly appropriate to its recent commercial history: she has scanned it into her computer and made it her screen saver.

—Rebecca Mead

WALL STREET FOLLIES
A FINANCIAL VOICE AS WILD AS THE MARKET

Just after four o'clock on a recent afternoon, Andy Serwer was sitting in his cluttered office at *Fortune*, studying stock charts on his computer and watching a documentary about David Cassidy on VH1. Serwer is a stock-market columnist for Fortune.com; he also writes for the magazine and appears each weekday on CNN's "In the Money." The markets had closed a few minutes earlier: in one session, the Nasdaq had fallen more than seven per cent (this was right in the middle of the worst week in the index's history). The volume on the television was very loud. "VH1 gives you much better rhythm than the financial channels," Serwer said. Cassidy appeared on the screen, chatting with Dinah Shore. "That would be nice to get on the Dinah Shore show," Serwer said.

Forty years old, with dark-brown hair and a smooth oval face, Serwer is one of those short, round men who seem packed with energy. No one familiar with his work would have been surprised that he could simultaneously juggle in his mind David Cassidy, the loss of billions of dollars in market capitalization, and Dinah Shore. Here's a passage from the column he wrote that day:

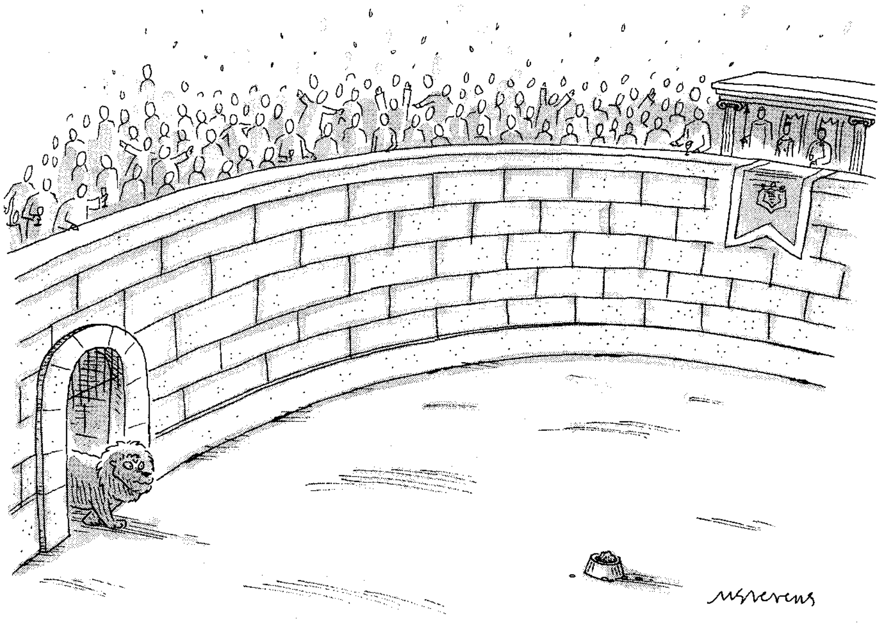
> WHAT'S WRONG WITH OUR TECH STOCKS???... That's what everyone's asking me. Hey isn't the better question: WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?!?!?! They're not YOUR tech stox! They belong to Mrs. Market. And she does what she wants with 'em, *in case you haven't noticed!!!!!* So they're down. Whoopee-doodle deal!!!! Back to where they were six months ago. This only hurts if you are a total chuckleface and mortgaged your brand spankin' new condo and margined up on Broadvision. They warned you about this. You didn't listen. Otherwise, I say calm down. Nothing in the economy has changed. It does suck, I grant thee that, but hey, we are setting it all up for a summer rally!!!!! (Say like Morey Amsterdam: 'Oh boy, I love summer rallies.')

The following week, when the market rose sharply, Serwer wrote, "What goes down must come up!!!!!! I mean, Holy Sauerbraten!!!!" Clearly, the incidence of exclamation points in Serwer's prose is a poor measure of market performance, since it remains constant no matter what happens.

There is a tradition on Wall Street of commentators who write like sports columnists. The true calling of *Barron's* Alan Abelson, for example, seems to have been to cover the racetrack. With the rise of the rowdy culture associated with the Nasdaq, the hosts of cable financial shows often seem indistinguishable from the braying commentators on cable sports shows. Serwer is part of this tradition, but he takes it further, adding an assaultive familiarity. The result is someone who sounds like the most enthusiastic class correspondent in the history of the universe. One recent column ended, "Thanks O!!!!!! Hey a big Howdy to Megan, from Uncle Andrew!!!! (You too Swish!!!!) Hi Bill Harrison for me!!!!!" Achaea had Homer, the Spanish Civil War had Hemingway, California had the Beach Boys, and now our hyperactive stock market has its own poet-singer—Andy Serwer.

Serwer is the son of a former Wall Streeter who became a musicologist. Growing up in Maryland, Serwer said, he always wondered why the newspaper's sports pages and business pages were next to each other. "Then I realized they're the same thing," he said. "They're stats." After college, he got a job with a company that tracked down Securities and Exchange Commission documents for arbitrageurs. "Boesky's guy would say, 'Anything on Coneco?' " he recalls. Serwer went to business school and then journalism school, and fifteen years ago he joined *Fortune*. His on-line column started in 1997 and now has sixty thousand E-mail subscribers. Jimmy Lee, who runs Chase Manhattan's investment-banking operations, is one of a number of important Wall Street figures who read Serwer. "The column is always cutting-edge and astute," Lee said. David Pottruck, the co-C.E.O. of Charles Schwab, said, "I'm a great fan of Andy. He's way out there. I E-mail him, 'Andy, you forgot your Prozac this morning.' Andy is fun to read but also has some real commentary there."

"I don't pretend to be a sage," Ser-



wer said as he channel-surfed. "I want to have fun. This is part of the culture—day trading, pop music, the Internet." Serwer writes about sports and music in almost every column. Last week, he started a list called "If Stocks Were Bands!!!!!!!" Microsoft: the Rolling Stones. Oracle: Red Hot Chili Peppers. Amazon: 'N Sync. Broadcom: Creed. These are the things that matter to Serwer. "My take on the day's news is 'Why don't you just leave Elián alone?' " he said.

When he was asked if he warns people about the unfun part of the market—its risks—he said, "I don't do that so much. I'm not one who says you gotta be careful. Of course, the ship can go down. But when you're writing a daily thing and the market goes up seventy-five points each day, it's boring to keep saying 'Watch out.' So I'd say, 'It's going, baby, and you better ride it!' "

Serwer does care about earnings, but he doesn't hold much with the notion that you can determine an intrinsic value for a stock by using traditional methods of discounting future cash flows, and so on. "You just want to be right," he said. "Who cares how you get to Christmas?" The old methods will sometimes work, but so will the new ones. "It doesn't matter what you think," he said. "It matters what everyone else thinks. Understanding what the crowd is going to do is the name of the game."

—*James Collins*

• •

POESY DEPT.

AN ENGLISH DYLANOLOGIST ON LONG ISLAND

Great teachers are like great pop music: exposure to them generally happens when you are young and impressionable, when your pliable sensibility can incorporate their influence. Christopher Ricks, the eminent British literary critic, has been a great teacher to several generations of students, and among his academic progeny is Steven Isenberg, the president of Adelphi University, in Garden City, who last week invited Ricks to lecture about his own pop-music passion, the work of Bob Dylan. On the stage of the University Center, Ricks, who is sixty-six and bald but for tufts of white hair over his ears, was donnish in a light summer suit; but when he played a few Dylan recordings he shut his eyes and waggled his head and smiled with a kind of youthful wistfulness. After listening to "One Too Many Mornings," Ricks said, "I think that is the one that moved me to write to him and ask him to marry me. I said I would be willing to have an operation, if he liked, or not, if he preferred." When it came to "The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll," Ricks assumed the traditional position for listening to folk rock, known to every alumnus of the sixties: he sat cross-legged on the floor behind the lectern and rocked back and forth, his face buried in his hands.

Ricks is the kind of Old School Eng-lit critic who talks about rhyme and meter rather than about indeterminacy and gender issues, and he gave Dylan's compositions a brisk once-over that in its rigor would have satisfied even the most grouchy of cultural conservatives. He saw in "Hattie Carroll" allusions to Genesis (the line about her being "slain by a cane" reminds us, he said, of he who committed the first murder); he compared a rhyme in "If Not for You" with one in Andrew Marvell's "Horatian Ode Upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland." Shakespeare was mentioned in a comparison not unfavorable to Dylan, and so were Keats and Hopkins and T. S. Eliot. Such contemporary intellectual luminaries as Roger Scruton, Ronald Dworkin, Richard Posner, and Helen Vendler were cited. "Helen Vendler told me she could not listen to me on Dylan because she could not bear to hear him quoted with an English accent," Ricks said. "But I have to listen to Helen Vendler quoting Tennyson and saying"—here he affected a Harvard drawl—" 'Every grain of sand.' "

The Adelphi audience was strangely self-segregating, rather like guests at a wedding, with the grizzled professorial oldsters sitting on the right side of the aisle, their heads waggling as emphatically as Ricks's was. On the left side, there were students who weren't even old enough to have been conceived to a classic Dylan song, but they jiggled in their seats at the faster numbers nonetheless, and listened raptly to Ricks as he declared that there are some songs, like "Hattie Carroll," that Dylan should just never perform again. "You don't have rights over your own works of art," he said. "At some point they become the world's, not yours."

After the lecture, Ricks explained that he had never had a chance to school Dylan in the poetics of Dylan. The professor has never met the singer. "After I wrote to him, I never heard back from him," Ricks said cheerily, as he greeted all those who came to pay their respects by gasping, "Isn't he wonderful?" He shrugged off Dylan's neglect with equanimity. "I expect he gets a lot of letters from bald professors," he said.

—*Rebecca Mead*

"Electric Slide" © Don Julian. License courtesy SSV Music.

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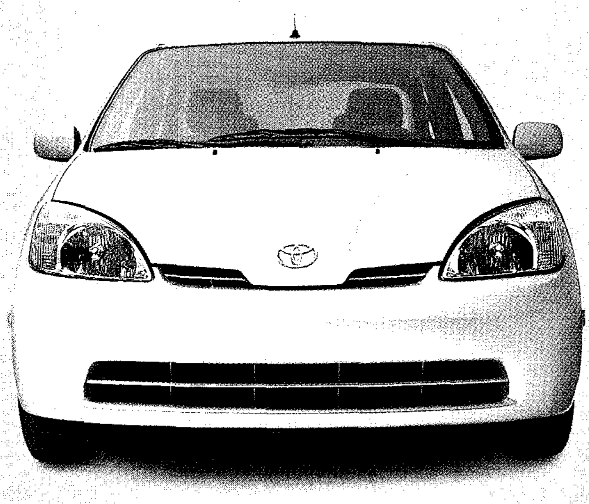

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FINANCIAL PAGE
THE PRICELINE PARADOX

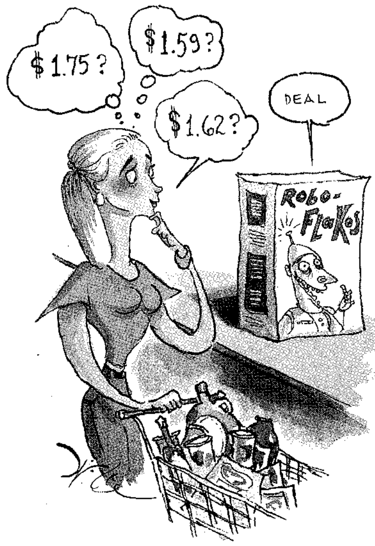
I have no idea why Priceline.com chose William Shatner as its spokesperson, and last week when I sat down with Jay Walker, the company's founder, I forgot to ask him. My guess is that it had to do with that "to boldly go . . ." business. Priceline.com, which is often dismissed as a glorified coupon-clipping service, delivers what Walker calls "buyer-driven pricing": you go on-line, say what you're willing to pay for something (plane tickets, apples, whatever), and then find out if your offer is accepted. Walker maintains that this represents nothing less than a new stage in the evolution of capitalism. He may be half right.

The retail regime Walker is trying to overturn was founded by another pricing prophet, John Wanamaker, who popularized his system more than a century ago. It was called the price tag, and it wasn't widely adopted until the last Gilded Age, after Wanamaker decided to put one on all the items in his Philadelphia emporium. Before then, prices were set mostly through bargaining. A salesman would size you up as you came through the door, and then the haggling would start. Wanamaker, a civic-minded Presbyterian, considered this inefficient and discourteous. So he gave all his products fixed prices and trumpeted them in his advertising. Within a decade or so, the fixed-price revolution had taken hold in the major cities of Europe and the United States.

But how do sellers know what to put on the price tags? The process is something like voting. Out of the cacophony of yes-no decisions that a buyer makes (between a hundred and five hundred a week, Walker figures), a collective judgment emerges about the appropriate price of everything from flat-screen TVs to Cap'n Crunch. Price, as economists like Friedrich Hayek insisted, conveys information. The trouble is that fixing prices makes them less informative. Sony's stock price fluctuates each moment as people buy and sell; Sony's TV prices don't.

But Wanamaker's revolution created a bigger problem. With a price tag, some customers are being undercharged, because they would have been willing to pay more, and others aren't paying at all, because they won't buy the item at that price. Hence the great challenge of modern retail: how to discount to the cheapskates without giving a free ride to the spendthrifts.

Over the past century, companies have tried various ways of doing this. Witness the coupon, which cleverly deters free riders by imposing a minor inconvenience: only price-sensitive customers keep their scissors handy. Then, there's the technique that the economist Hal Varian calls "versioning": think of the different prices that FedEx charges for morning and afternoon delivery. Versioning lures thrifty souls while assuring the high-end customers that they're getting more for paying more. But versioning is no radical advance: prices remain fixed; there are just a few more of them. That's why Walker, stretching the point, says, "In a retail economy, all goods are always mispriced."


$1.75?
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MICHAEL WITTE

Walker's solution to the mispricing problem is deceptively simple. In the Internet era, he realized, you can find out how much people are willing to pay for goods directly—by asking them. And that's the essence of Jay Walker's counterevolution. There are a few crucial refinements, of course. To protect sellers from spendthrifts who are slumming as a lark, Priceline.com injects uncertainty into the system: you don't know for sure which hotel you'll stay at, or which airline you'll fly on—and the less you offer the less likely that your offer will be accepted. What's more, if you offer too little for an item and are rejected, you can't make another offer for a set period of time. These rules make it hard to "game" the system.

Now, because Priceline.com began by selling airline tickets and hotel rooms, some people have assumed that the model would work only with perishable goods. Airlines don't like to fly planes with empty seats: that's money gone forever, so they're motivated to discount heavily. Yet what about businesses selling goods that are as valuable today as they were yesterday? Ah, but there's no such thing. Any unsold product loses value, because it costs money simply to store and display it and because the money tied up in inventory can't be put to work elsewhere. All things being equal, any business would prefer to sell everything it has on hand *right now*. And what customer wouldn't like a chance to name his own price? "Price *über alles*," Walker says in that retiring way of his. "Savings have driven every economic revolution." Everyone wins. Hello, Walker. Goodbye, Wanamaker.

Only, not so fast. John Wanamaker knew what he was about: consumers *like* fixed prices, above all because we worry about being played for fools. It's why Americans hate buying cars, which is the closest they're likely to come to bargaining in a Middle Eastern bazaar. Early in our conversation, Walker picked up a book—entitled, fittingly, "Digital Capital"—and pointed to the price printed on the dust jacket. "This will not be here in the future," he said. He's wrong there. What allays the anxiety of "buyer-driven" pricing is that you can always compare your offer with the retail price. "Maybe my offer should have been even lower," you tell yourself, "but at least I know that Delta would have charged me more." You'll accept the uncertainty that Priceline.com demands—uncertainty about brand, about time of flight, etc.—only if you have the certainty that you're getting a bargain.

So buyer-driven pricing ultimately requires the existence of a fixed retail price. Then again, if just ten per cent of sales in this country became buyer-driven we're still talking about almost a trillion dollars. Jay Walker isn't knocking down John Wanamaker's store. He's standing on top of it.

—*James Surowiecki*

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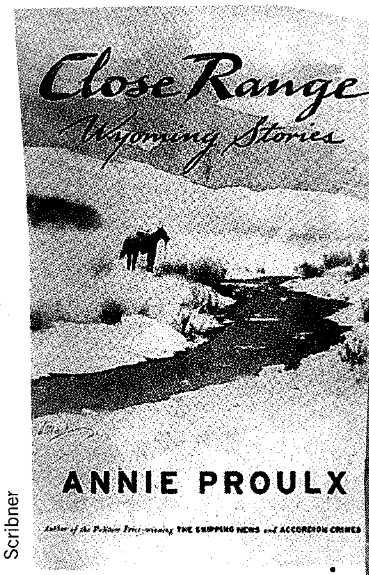
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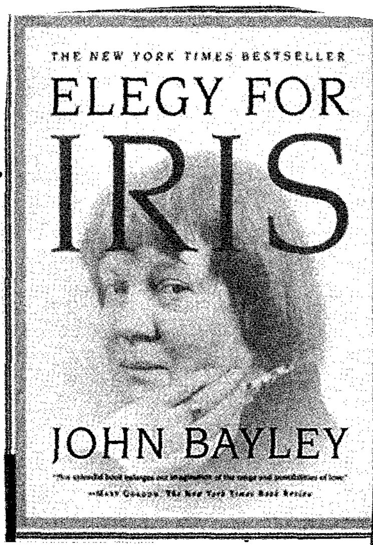
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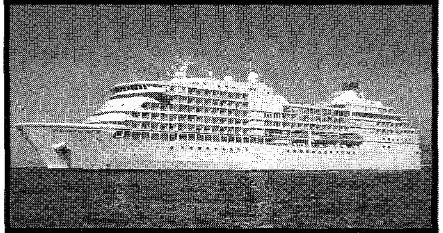

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PERSONAL HISTORY

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A life in the circus.

BY EDWARD HOAGLAND

In the spring of 1951, when I was eighteen and finishing my freshman year at Harvard, I wrote to Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus to ask for a job, spurred in particular by my fascination with animals. At home in Connecticut I'd kept dogs, cats, turtles, snakes, alligators, pigeons, opossums, and goats, and knew from seeing the circus perform in Madison Square Garden that it would give me access to bigger creatures. The nightly travel, the exotic crafts and dangerous skills, the association with other handicapped people (I stuttered) who had made a go of life under the big top were more nebulous attractions. I believed I had an intuitive understanding of animals and wanted to test it. To my surprise, a brief note from Winter Quarters in Sarasota, Florida, enclosing a schedule of the route, informed me that I could have a job with the Animal Department if I showed up when school let out. Luckily, my parents didn't object; in both of their families young men went out into the world during the summer and worked—my father on a cattle ship from San Francisco to Europe after his sophomore year, my mother's brothers at logging jobs in the north woods.

Hitchhiking to the show's one playing date in Connecticut that year, near Hartford, I caught my last ride with a middle-aged woman who seemed excited to be helping a boy "run away to join the circus." I thanked her and left the road, surveying and then carefully crossing the intricate tumult of the vast lot, clutching my folded note. Canvas trucks and water trucks roared around. Clowns were changing behind a wagon. A tumbler stood on his hands. Two Caterpillar tractors hitched onto the tongues of a series of other wagons and pulled them into the proper positions. The immense oval of the billowing big top, ocean blue and about five hundred feet long and two hundred feet wide, had already been erected, with flags flapping from the five center poles. A man, a tiny figure, was adjusting the air vents way up on the ridgeline. The sideshow and other satellite tops and tents—olive or white or brown—were laid out all around, with personnel exceeding a thousand moving about, and three times that many rubberneckers. The seethe was matter-of-fact and orderly, however. Performers loafing or darting on errands were dressed like ragamuffins but with astute, daredevil faces. Several elephants had returned from pulling the quarter poles of the big top into place and were being washed and watered.

This was not yet a show. This was an itinerant city. I headed for where the elephants were chained to stakes pounded into the ground in a half-circle: twenty-four elephants, swaying forward and sideways and back, swinging their nimble trunks in idiosyncratic private rhythms. The men who were idly supervising them carried wooden clubs with iron hooks attached to one end, which they leaned on as they stood in the sun and swung like baseball bats if they had to be punitive. These were big men, compared with the agile, wiry horse hands who ran beside their charges during the performance and rode them back and forth like a rodeo string between the railroad yards and the circus lot, morning and night. The elephant men rode, too, from the train, in a more august procession, sitting like mahouts on the elephants' necks, and they were slow-fuse types, tall-legged, barrel-bodied. I approached three of them who were guarding the herd to proffer my note from the front office in Sarasota.

"This ain't the Animal Department. This is No. 12 Wagon," the bulkiest guy told me, pointing at the Elephant Department's wagon nearby, with the number stencilled on it, and a tent alongside. "You're looking for No. 10 Wagon."

I nodded my thanks, following where he had pointed, and soon spotted No. 10, a fourteen-foot, red-painted wagon on rubber wheels about fifty yards away. It had a certain air of éclat, having belonged to the Al G. Barnes and Sells-Floto Combined Circus during the thirties, and the door at the back was open. An old man with white hair, named Blackie Barlow, sat on a folding chair inside, over the four-foot ladder. A tarpaulin had been tied from the roof like a tent fly on one side to cover half a dozen footlockers, or "crumb boxes," as they were called, and a water barrel and buckets stood beside that. A pickup truck was also parked there, and from its bed a cluster of men had just pulled a dead horse. A Mohawk Indian called Chief was beginning to chop at the horse to dismember it.

A stunning sight, if I had paused to figure it out or let it rattle me. But I went instead to the white-haired man, who was watching from just inside the wagon with an ironic, not unkind smile.

Dressed like ragamuffins but with astute, daredevil faces. A circus in 1958, photographed by Bruce Davidson.

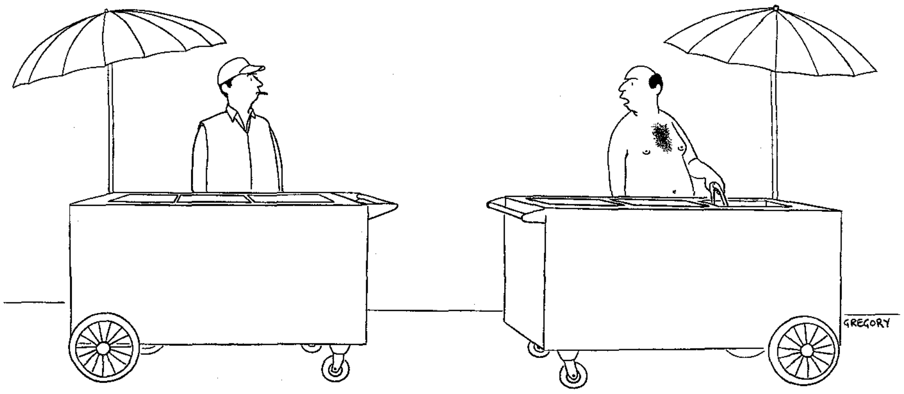
MAGNUM

He had a quiet voice, with a South Florida accent, and he looked at my note, observing cursorily that I was unable to answer a question because I stuttered, and pointed without further comment to a bigger, fortyish gentleman in a flannel shirt and chino slacks, who was supervising the butchering of the horse. This was the menagerie's head, C. R. Montgomery, who, with his wife, travelled ahead of the show buying horses from farmers when food for the big cats was needed, as well as all the other animal food, and dickered with zoo directors in the towns we stopped in, if a trade seemed desirable. He knew what creatures a dealer had coming in on a ship from Siam or Sumatra to New York or Miami, and he could help the circus veterinarian with basic treatments. C.R. was an all-around animal man of the sort that circuses used to have. He paused to read my note, grinned at Blackie with raised eyebrows, and stopped Chief from chopping the horse to hand me the axe.

I wanted this job, and it was a dead horse lying in front of me, not a sufferer, so I swung and swung at the carcass's haunches, my sneakers slipping in the blood, while Chief and my future comrades Ray and Bible gathered around laughing. After I had proved that I was willing to try doing what I was told, C.R. took the axe away before I lost my footing and hurt myself with it.

"I guess we gotta hire him," he said. Blackie gave me a meal ticket and put me under the wing of Bible, a bespectacled ex-con who took care of Buddy, the baby orangutan; Chester, the big "Nile Hippopotamus"; Betty Lou, the pygmy hippo from West Africa; Bobby, the "African One-Horned Black Rhinoceros"; and a chimp, some green and mangabey monkeys, and an Amazonian tapir. He also helped Ray with the giraffes.

Bible was a reader, a soft-spoken man, a peacemaker, reasonable and civil, a sort of oasis of calm, except during the seizures of binge drinking that ripped out the fabric of his life from time to time. He kept his distance from most of the other workhands, perhaps out of fear that the more visible alcoholism and



"Trust me—sex sells."

other problems, from epilepsy to schizophrenia, that some of them had would capsize his fragile equilibrium. And it did collapse after a few weeks, whether by this contagion or an internally haywire clock. Then, like so many of the men I worked with, he disappeared—present at teardown but gone by dawn.

Ray, on the other hand, lasted. A cynic, a curser, a dirty-joke teller, Ray reminded me of a bus driver I had had in school who was raffish, irreverent, unkempt, and taught little kids to snigger and smoke, or told them how sex was accomplished if they wanted to know, but who was steadier than he looked—always showed up early, drove safely, and discouraged behavior that was mean or cruel. Ray was so dependable that he didn't travel two-to-a-bunk, tiered three bunks high, in the windowless dormitory railroad cars that the rest of us fourteen-dollar-a-week men were confined to. Instead, Baby Irene, the Fat Lady, took him into her private compartment on a different train, and bought him clothes that (for all of his talk about how Irene complained his cock "couldn't get past the creases") he kept clean and pressed. He took excellent care of the giraffes, and functioned as a No. 3 man, after C.R. and Blackie, in the Animal Department. He'd only drink in a beer joint on the nights that it was safe because we were playing a big city and weren't going to travel; the train wouldn't pull out without him.

We had seventy railroad cars on three trains, forty-one of them flatcars for carrying the wagons in which everything, from the cookhouse to the fliers' aerial rigging, was then hauled to the lot. Chester the hippopotamus and Bobby the black rhinoceros had special twenty-foot cage-wagons, and the giraffes, Edith and Boston, were in taller, boxy constructions. Twelve performing bears were crowded into a twenty-two-foot barred wagon. The menagerie and cookhouse travelled on the first train, called the Flying Squadron. We would leave town first—before the performance was over if the hop was long and we needed to—to arrive in the next town around four-thirty in the morning. Ringstock (the ninety performing horses) and the elephants and the men who handled them travelled on the second train, along with the sideshow, the candy butchers, the ushers, the propmen, the pole wagons, seat wagons, canvas wagons, and the canvas crew, who tore down the big top and put it up again the next day. They got in several hours after us; the performers, in sleeper beds or compartments on the third train, arrived after eleven.

But the shrimp-pink dawn was *ours.* In every town, hundreds of small kids had been roused and brought to the railroad yard by their conscientious parents to marvel at our arrival. They stood overhead on a bridge or on the nearest roofs, and lined the service road and the vacant lots, waving politely, timidly calling. When we'd been shuttled by bus the few miles to the new circus lot, we would build a bonfire of scrap wood and stand around it or squat on our heels, waiting for the cookhouse tent to go up and smoke from the stoves to rise—coffee, oatmeal, toast, and eggs—and for our animals to

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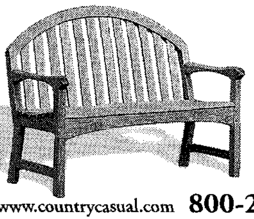
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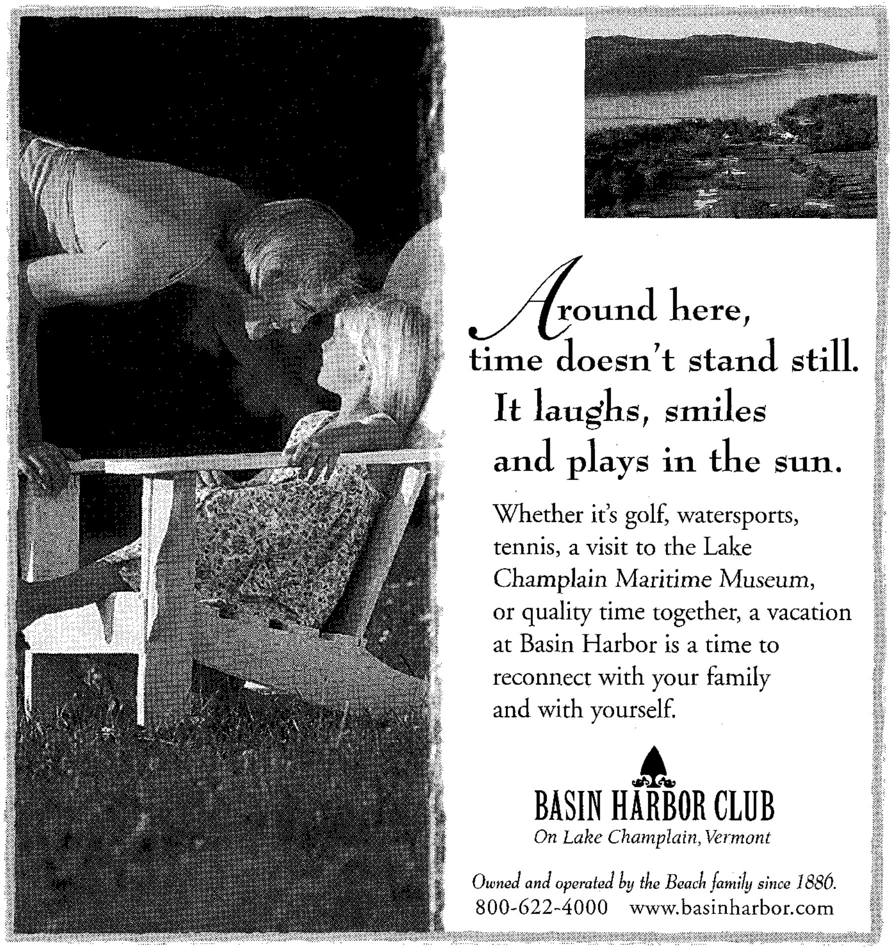
come, while many more locals wandered near, wanting to speak, or waited to witness whatever we did: blow a harmonica, walk to the river, whittle a stick. There was often a river at hand, Ohio-size or a little one, because the circus grounds were waste grounds, sparsely used during the rest of the year except for a carnival, a revival meeting, or a county fair. Most boosters and businessmen turned their backs on the riverbank for development in the fifties, until nearly all the other land was gone. Rivers had seemed disreputable, like highways now—the haunt of bargemen and tugmen, raftsmen, flatboatmen, keelboatmen, freightmen, drifters, prostitutes, and tramps—a place for fly-by-night people in hobo jungles.

Bible liked to sleep out next to the wagons on the flatcars in balmy weather, instead of inside our rattling, claustrophobic crew cars, having no doubt acquired a love for the open sky in prison. And I sometimes joined him when the moon was out. Crossing Indiana and Iowa, you could hear the lions sniff at their ventilation slats for the smells of the veldt and roar to see if a lion out there on the prairie would answer; they thumped the walls when they scented the Mississippi, or the forests of Minnesota, or the Platte River in Nebraska. When the train slowed, I was sometimes tempted to open their cages so they could go find a life for themselves in the wild, however abbreviated. These were glory nights, vivid nights.

I don't remember my various bedmates inside the sleeping car, except if they had nightmares or if a man was so husky that he crowded me on the narrow pallet and I had to lie on my side, keeping my arms over my head in order to sleep. Though we lacked windows, the open gratings in the side of the car provided plenty of wind and a loud lullaby of clicketting rails, pistoning wheels, and the occasional wail of the locomotive's long whistle. Our sixteen-hour workdays, too, encouraged everybody to sleep. When I did have bad dreams, they were very sudden, precipitated by another train on the opposite track roaring past at high speed with a shrieking scream. I would imagine not the train but an elephant stampeding, trumpeting, with me in its path—because I did like to lie on the ground at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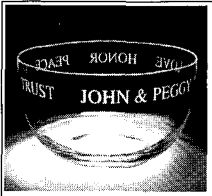

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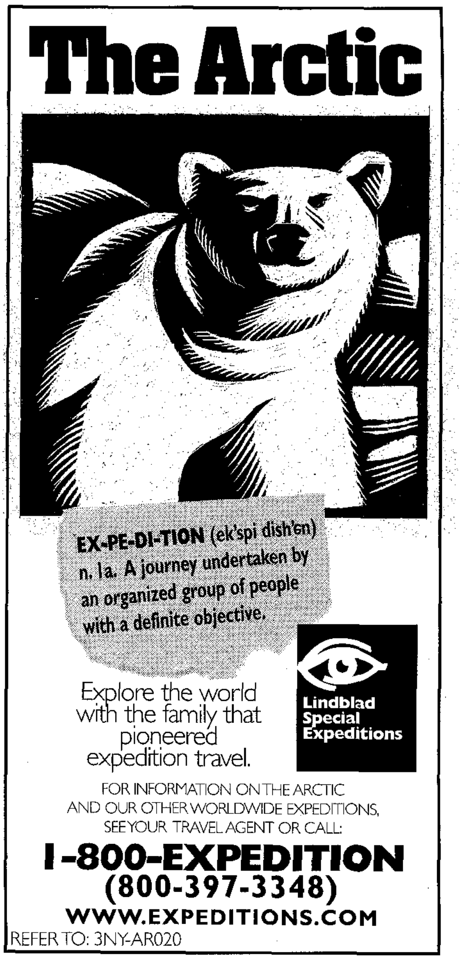
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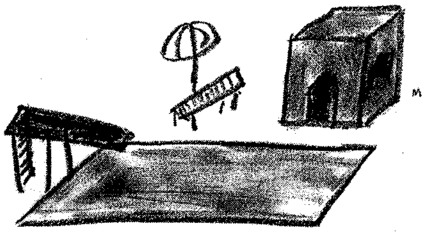
high noon next to one of them, pretending to nap at a placid moment when the big top was up and the elephant boss was maybe at lunch. The beast's feet and trunk inscribed whimsical circles of her own design in the air not far above my head, like finger painting, dainty and quirky.

If not an elephant's trumpet, my mind might transmute the midnight roar of a passing freight train into a tiger, because I was soon also playing with the big cats. Both Blackie and Chief, their keeper, recognized my interest as useful. Chief showed me how to water them three times a day and scrape dung from their cages with an iron rod that the Ringstock blacksmith had fashioned. Later on, when the circus stayed overnight in a large town—Pittsburgh, Toledo, Detroit, Chicago, Milwaukee, Minneapolis—for extra performances, I slept on the ground under the lions' wagon. Many of us preferred to stay on the lot rather than go back to the railroad yards. The ground was no harder than our wooden-slat beds, and there was a grandeur to the big top, night or day. The sea-colored canvas, eleven hundred and forty feet in circumference, mounted in hammocky waves from a hundred and sixteen side poles toward the sixty-five quarter poles, and then higher and higher, with the immensity and serenity of surf, to the baling rings on the center poles, about seventy feet up. Earlier in the summer, Bible and I had locked ourselves inside Buddy the orangutan's cage, or in one of the giraffe wagons, in order to feel protected from the local muggers who in a city like Albany might roam through the lot during the wee hours. But the farther west I got and the more I knew about the cats, the more I trusted their protection. No one was going to brave the lions' wide forepaws hanging out between the bars over my head after I bedded down.

At the train yards, we played cards on the tracks in the twilight before we left, sitting on pieces of cardboard, and heated burgers on a kerosene stove or ate them raw as "cannibal burgers." Bible leafed through magazines on his bunk when other people were drinking beer; and Chief would generally show up at the last minute, because his particular friends, a Sioux in Ringstock who was named Little Chief, and Navajo Chief, who was an elephant man, took the later train along with their animals, after the show. He'd stay on the lot with them as long as he could. He flared into incandescence when he got loaded, like one of those solitary firecrackers that shoot high and fall harmlessly, but he tried to stay sober. Like the Mohawks who dominated high-steel skyscraper work in New York City at this time, Chief (Ralph Leaf was his given name) indicated that he had chosen a risky vocation on purpose, as if to fly the flag of the Indian Nation and thumb his nose at the pathetic alternatives on the reservation. Similarly, he expected the tigers and lions to maintain their dignity and character, although caged—to make a show of rising, bristling, and roaring at him when challenged to do so. He stood straight to give them an example, emitting a cheeky, deep hiss and raising an arm, his smile admiringly mimicking their snarls. They appeared to enjoy it, as a substitute for exercise. Most of our animals were confined in eleven-by-eight-foot Second World War ordnance wagons that had been bought by Ringling Brothers and converted to carry a couple of lions or tigers, or a mother and three younger leopards, or a jaguar, cheetah, and panther, partitioned apart. Since they were so cruelly cramped, what you could do for their creature comfort was minimal, apart from being friendly and gentle.

Liquor reclaimed people from our train every week, if not every night. They vanished into the oubliette of a binge and woke up alone in a suddenly unfriendly community. A circus hand lost his magic when the show scrubbed off its makeup and left town. He was now an object of police suspicion, a dirty, hungover bum. Or if he did manage to scramble onto a rolling flatcar but then lost his hold and tumbled off the train in fifty miles, and was lucky enough to survive, he would have to hobble up to some stranger's door with a broken shoulder, torn clothes, a face full of gravel,



smelling of alcohol, and no pedigree at all. My friends were mostly living on borrowed time, and giving the big boss, C.R., five or ten dollars a week out of their fourteen to hold for them so that they would have something saved by Thanksgiving to survive on during the winter. Blackie eventually died on the shoulder of a highway at Winter Quarters, hit by a car while drunk, I heard. But Chief left Ringling Brothers even before I did. (I stayed with the show for five months, altogether, from 1951 to 1953.) Clawed by a tiger in Madison Square Garden, he married his hospital nurse and settled in Brooklyn.

A stutter was no big deal if you were a nimble eighteen-year-old—jumping on and off the back of the Caterpillar tractors and scrambling up on top of the menagerie wagons when we set up our part of the show and tore it down again—and you genuinely cared for the animals. After all, we had Charles Bavent, whose hands were attached to his shoulders like flippers and who went by the name of Sealo; and Gilbert Reichert, "The Tallest Man in the World"; and Freda Pushnik, "Our Poor Little Armless and Legless Girl." The gorillas' caretaker never spoke at all. Dressed in black, he lived in a compartment of their air-conditioned, glassed-in wagon, next to M'Toto, the famous "widow" of the celebrated silverback Gargantua. Tenacity in this milieu was better than muscles. Blackie, a trouper for decades, a loner who peppered nuisances with his dry commentary ("Elmer" was what he called all the towners), bestowed his approval on me, and even his protection on a few occasions when exceptionally tough guys showed up for a spell, straight from the prison yard—though I was seldom aware of needing it.

The castes of the circus were byzantine. The star performers—of exact balance and surpassing daring—were supreme. Then the money bosses and the performance directors. Then other, run-of-the-mill performers; the logistics bosses and department heads; the clowns, in a class of their own; the sideshow freaks and various attractions; and the longtime senior workhands. Then the come-and-go white roustabouts like me (eighty-some animal caretakers, for instance, counting the horse grooms and

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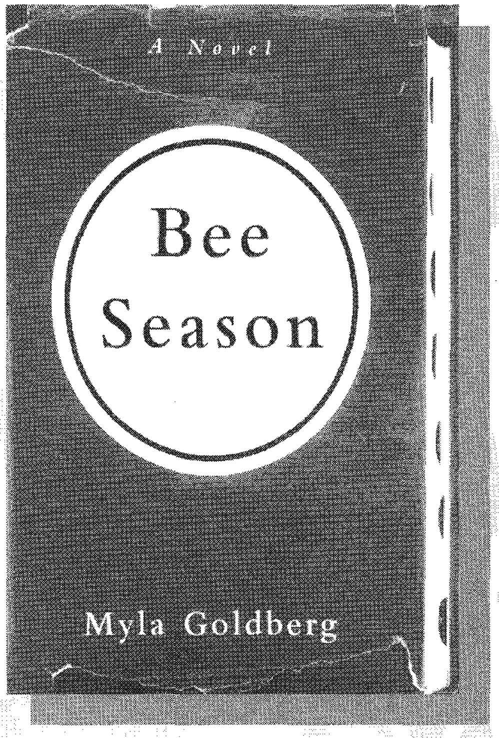

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the "bull," or elephant, department; and sixty-six men to handle the cookhouse). And finally, the black workhands, who were paid only twelve dollars a week and were limited to the one job of unrolling the big-top canvas, which would eventually seat eleven thousand spectators, sledgehammering the countless side-pole stakes into the ground for an hour or two in synchronized crews of four—chanting slave songs to keep their swings falling in perfect tandem—then getting it all up, gradually guying it all out, and tearing it all down again at eleven at night.

My first contact with blunt Southern racism was here; and although Jim Crow-style bigotry had more complexity and sometimes more "give" than the familiar innuendos of Northern prejudice, underneath the South's racism, as late as the fifties, lay the threat of death. You saw cops—or the elephant men with their clubs—chasing a Negro, and knew from how frantically he ran that he might be about to die.

As for us white guys, we could have been fired for talking to the performers, though the animal trainers might chat with us about animal handling in passing. The veterinarian's wife had raised our four leopards by hand and came by every week to play with them in jeans and a lacy white blouse or a glittery costume, probably to check out the passing parade of cagehands, in case anybody unkind got hired. The white of her blouse set off her wealth of curly black hair, which bounced as she walked. She was an aerialist, with the posture and spring in her step of a star, and—joyfully giving her hands and whole arms to the leopards through the bars, to lick and toy with—her back arched, as performers' bodies do without their even thinking about it, when life is at a peak for them. I had a crush on Josephine, the Mexican snake charmer, as well, whose hair hung clear to her coccyx, and who hefted gorgeous boas and pythons, and was a waitress in Florida in the off-season, and would talk freely to anybody, being billed with the "freaks."

Pat Valdo was the performance director during my stint, and Harold Ronk the stentorian ringmaster ("Children of all ages . . ."). Both of them were circus paragons. Valdo had a mime's face, protean yet self-effacing, a lightness, a quickness, in and out of scenes like Janus in the tragicomedy of what a circus is really all about. The pie in the face, the slipping on a banana peel, the clockwork horses and obedient elephants, and an ovation for the high-wire man who doesn't fall to his death. Ours was Harold Alzana, "Whose Disregard of Danger Has Made Millions Gasp." Emmett Kelly and Otto Griebling were the tramp clowns (Griebling acerbic and Kelly sweet-sad in the humor they projected), and Felix Adler famously wore whiteface, using a little terrier and a piglet to connect with the crowd. Pinito Del Oro, a superb Spanish aerialist who did headstands and cloud swings on the trapeze bar, shared top billing with Harold Alzana, and was also the sultry centerpiece of a thirty-two-girl aerial ballet of "web-sitters" thrusting out their pretty calves from a forest of dangling ropes. And the Flying Concellos, of lengthy renown, somersaulted to the catcher over a barge-shaped net. We had foot-jugglers, slack-wire artists, foot-ladder acts, trampoline tumblers, chariot-riders, and a break-away sway pole—plus a band of thirty or so, which Merle Evans directed while flourishing his sterling cornet. By the close of his fifty-year career he may have been second only to John Philip Sousa in the pleasure he gave in that line of work.

And we had a lot of Europeans performing, needy and pent-up from the privations of the war. Some of the young ones bore the pinch of Occupation hunger. Their faces and frames still hadn't filled out, and they had the exile's air of wistful, agile dexterity—always in transit, never at home. Sirens in bikinis, gamines in tank tops, perch-pole acrobats, Roman riders, slender ethereal pinups, and simple musclemen—more than our hoboes, who at least were roaming their own continent, they looked uncommitted. Whether they had spent the early forties in Naples, Marseilles, or Frankfurt, it had been a hungry, fearful half decade for circus people, with their animals maybe starving, their wives and children huddled in cellars, the husbands in uniform, if not in combat.

There were seasoned female stars who had worked in peacetime arenas in Bucharest, Budapest, or Berlin, and then

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done mud shows under canvas through the ravaged countryside for bread and vegetables when anarchy had set in. Wiry, resilient, androgynous, ambiguous, they could sneak or swagger—haul trunks and duffelbags outdoors through a five-hour rainstorm, and then display their sponged-off, Dietrich-type legs in the limelight of the "spec," alongside the delicate, honey-blond Broadway showgirls from Billy Rose's Diamond Horseshoe Club, in New York, who also appeared with us. They could stand on the riverbank, ogling some of us boys swimming nude in the currents (when we stripped off our coveralls at noontime), and then, during a performance, gaze down enigmatically, vertiginously, from a trapeze at a young man in dingy coveralls who was constantly moving underneath them, anticipating on what part of his body he would take the force of the blow if a lady fell, but never otherwise exchanging two words with her. This tour—of Zanesville and Portsmouth, Ohio; Parkersburg, West Virginia; Battle Creek, Michigan; Mason City, Iowa; Ogden, Utah; and Pocatello, Idaho—surely seemed rather idyllic, painted on top of scarring memories, however comic and unsophisticated they may have thought Americans were.

We menagerie hands seldom watched the show. We hung around at No. 10 Wagon or with our animals to see that no towners hurt them or got hurt trying to fool with them. Meanwhile, the band's selections kept us exactly informed of what was happening inside the big top—Merle Evans's clarion cornet the leading voice in a medley of something like sixty snatches from many composers that accompanied each turn of the program. Tickets cost from seventy-five cents to four dollars, and, earning two dollars a day, we didn't feel obliged to answer for the hundredth time a particular question—like what the animals were fed. For Blackie, after a few years, it was almost torture. He probably sat in his wagon all day to escape the crowds asking where they could take a piss. For Chief, it was part of the white man's inanity: What do you think they eat? Where do you *want* to piss?

The lot supervisor and first-train superintendent was a beefy showman

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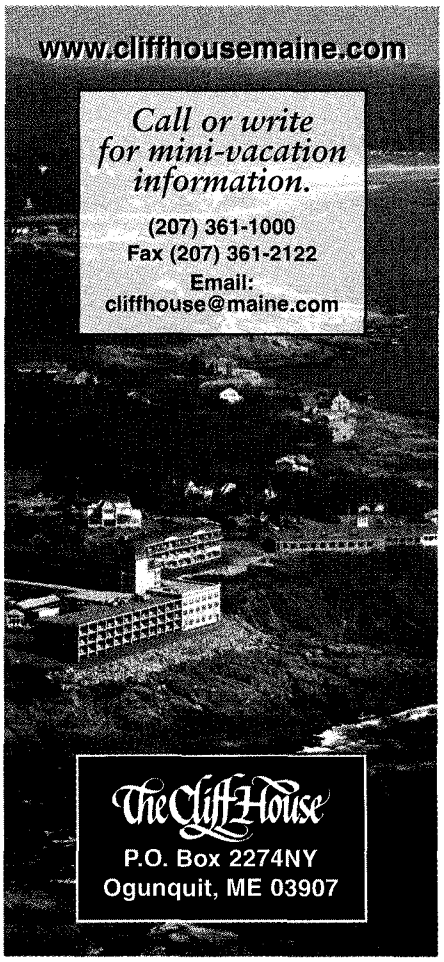
THE SECRET LIFE OF LUTHER COXE

If you'd met him as a boy you'd think
how unlikely that creation would choose
Luther for so serious a purpose.
Short, pale, with flaming red hair
darkened with filth, Luther always wore
a white scarf, winter and summer, cut
from a dish towel. If you sat behind
Luther in school as I did you saw
the two flushed ears jutting out and stuffed
with leaking wads of cotton batting
to fend off words, for words were what
Luther had no use for. On his desk
a blank, lined sheet of paper stayed week
after week, finally yellowed with age
and still unmarked. How he found his way
back and forth from home to school I learned
when I saw an older brother take
his arm and lead him past the baseball fields.
I did not go to the funeral,
none of his classmates did, but we stood
as a group outside the church and bowed
our heads as one when the family
descended the steps, the father mute
with grief, the mother pressing a black
cloth to her lips. On Monday morning
Mrs. Rowles said Luther had gone
to a finer place, and the class must
remember him so he could still live
in this world, but no one believed her,
for we had watched Luther all his life
advancing toward his final goal
by doing absolutely nothing
step by silent step with head held high.

—*Philip Levine*

named Lloyd Morgan. To the sheriff, the fire chief, the sanitation inspector, the police superintendent who might show up early, he personified the circus. In his oil slicker and rain boots, or sunny-weather double-breasted brown summer suit and polished shoes, with an alderman's big pinkie ring, he was unflappably gregarious, yet self-contained and toughly shrewd. Without being at all discourteous, he let everybody know that he had met about nineteen hundred county sheriffs before, that the circus had a "patch" whose job was to put in the fix with any necessary bribes—not him—and that an awful lot of children were going to have a splendiferous day if nobody got in the way now and spoiled it for them.

The marginal is often what's valued later: whether circus tents, elephants, and gorillas, or the composers, painters, and religious dissenters who shoot off energetically from the mainstream. I didn't write down the slave chants that the black workhands sang, didn't realize that the Sumatran and Siberian tigers I fed and watered might become extinct in the wild in my own lifetime, and the big top itself a subject for grainy documentaries. But I did learn about resilience, mobility, dignity, and even panache—from Lloyd Morgan, Merle Evans, Blackie Barlow, and Chief and his lions and tigers—at eighteen and nineteen, when it counts. ♦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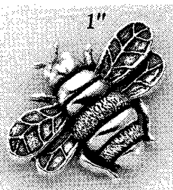
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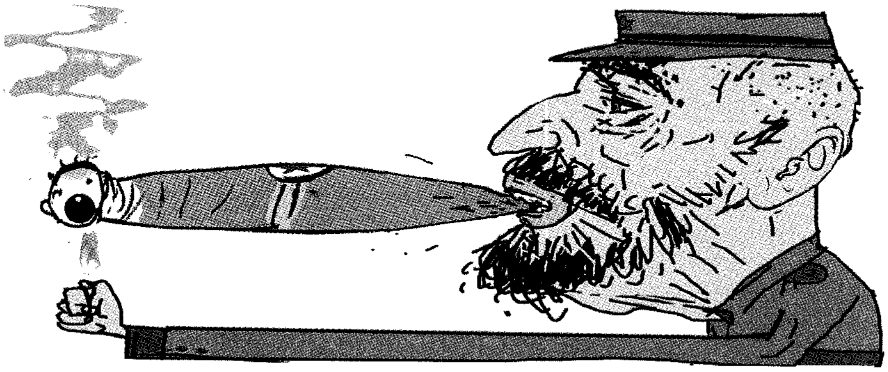
ELIÁN AT TWENTY

BY STEVE MARTIN

Yes, the photos were doctored. I was taken to a little room, where a photographer held me at gunpoint. Janet Reno came in and started into her irresistible shtick and I burst out laughing. The photo was snapped, and my head was Photoshopped onto another kid's body. I was then taken to a play yard, where a man masquerading as my father threw a Nerf Ball that I was supposed to chase. My own father is quite fat, certainly not as attractive as the man who was chosen to pose as him. I ran after the ball with a big grin on my face. Wouldn't you, with six AK-47s trained on you from six separate windows in a courtyard? It reminded me of when I was in Waco, being used as a pawn by the Clinton Administration.



The toughest part was the three years I spent on a neutral raft outside Havana Bay. Couldn't dock, couldn't go back to the United States. Food was helicoptered in by a Swiss mercy group, and sometimes my real father, Ugly Miguel, would row out and deliver the two dozen jars of mustard donated each month by the fine folks at Gulden's.

When I finally got back into Cuba, I was placed in a wooden box, which was then suspended from a scaffold in the town square while Castro himself held the ropes. I can still hear him saying, "Zees ees what happeeens to leettle boyz who sail acrozz zee sea." Then, of course, they started manufacturing my Smilewear™ briefs, and I never saw a penny from it. The man who posed as my father, the famous Cuban actor Desi Fundamenta Machista, would never see me afterward. I went to his trailer on the set of "Cabana Boy," but he wouldn't come out. I did get his autograph through an intermediary, however. I still have it.

I never blamed myself for all the Elián hopefuls who motorboated to Little Havana and barricaded themselves in at Relatives R Us. The media didn't even bother to cover the last dozen rescues, and when Al Sharpton came down to intervene in No. 64, there were only four protesters and a "Jerry Springer" segment producer on hand to witness it.

All this just to make Castro look good. I think that this event was what made it possible for him to snag and marry Jennifer Lopez. I now also see that I was an important figure in opening up U.S.-Cuban trade, although it certainly put an end to my life's dream of becoming a cigar smuggler. Don't get me wrong; I still love my relatives in Little Havana. After all, they are my mother's ex-husband's father's brother's family. I guess blood is thicker than water. ♦

ISTVAN BANYAI

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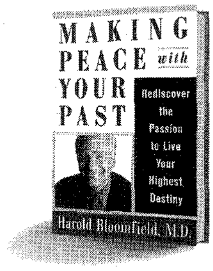
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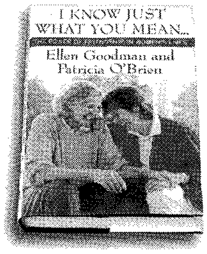
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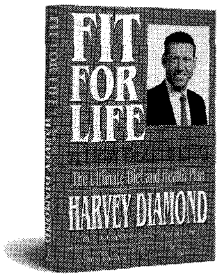
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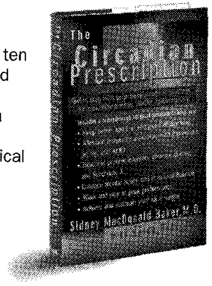
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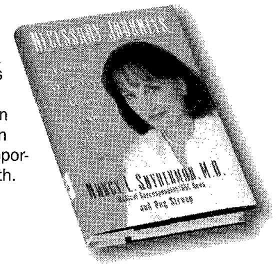
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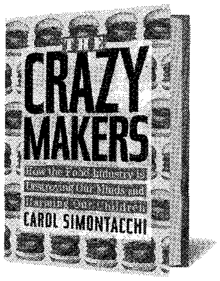
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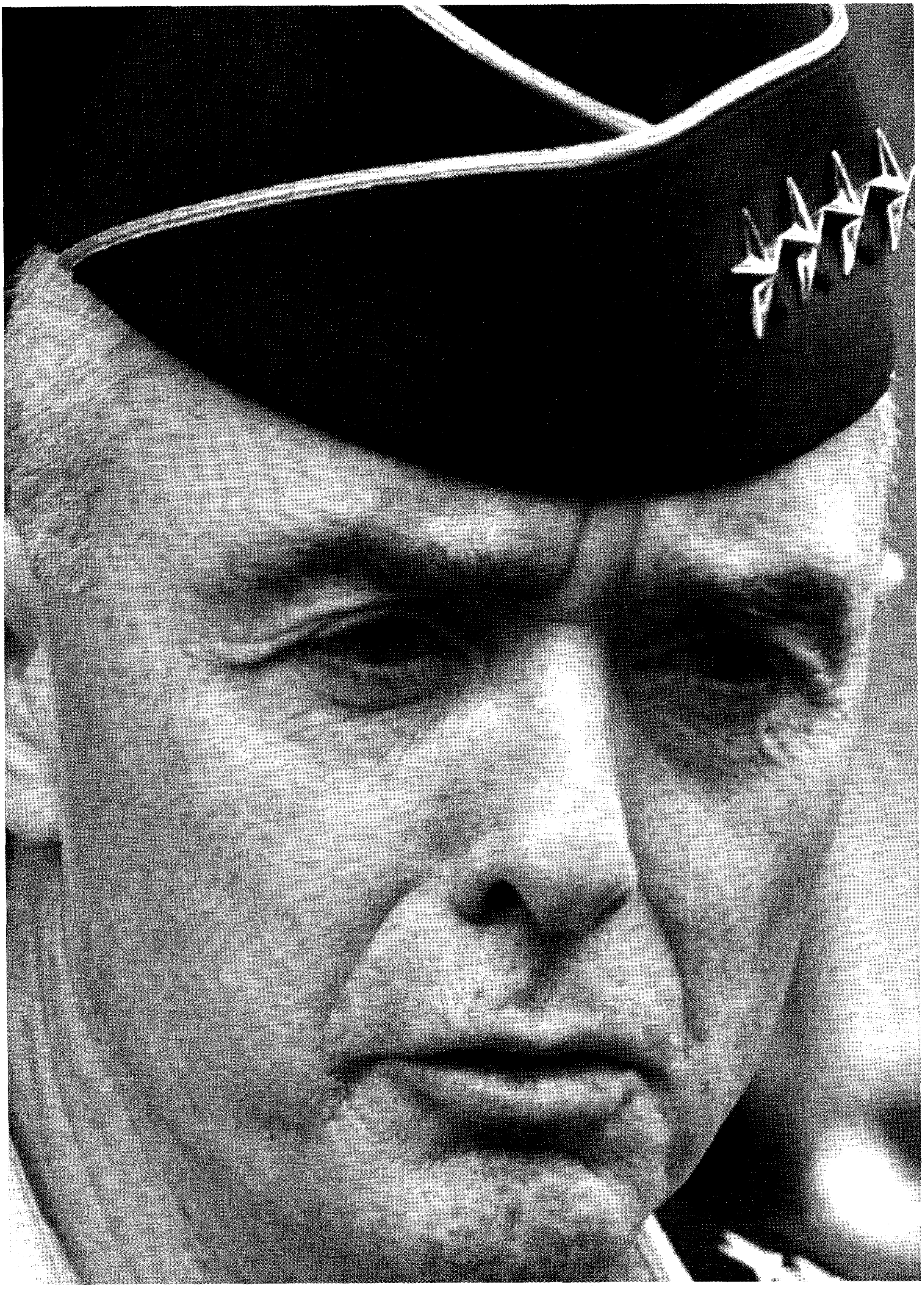


General Barry McCaffrey led his troops in one of the biggest—and most one-sided—battles of the Gulf War.

ANNALS OF WAR

OVERWHELMING FORCE

What happened in the final days of the Gulf War?

BY SEYMOUR M. HERSH

I—THE WAR

ACCOLADES

Barry McCaffrey has the best résumé of any retired combat general in the United States Army. The son of a distinguished general, he attended Phillips Academy, in Andover, Massachusetts, and West Point, and in 1966 was assigned to South Vietnam as a platoon leader. He served two combat tours, winning two Distinguished Service Crosses, two Silver Stars, and three Purple Hearts. He returned from Vietnam with a shattered left arm, which was saved only after two years of operations and rehabilitation. McCaffrey's career continued to be exemplary: he earned a master's degree, taught at West Point, and, as he moved up through the ranks, became an outspoken leader within the Army for women's rights and the rights of minorities. He had, as the journalist Rick Atkinson has noted, "the chiseled good looks of a recruiting poster warrior: hooded eyes; dark, dense brows; a clean, strong jawline; hair thick and gun-metal gray." He radiated command presence.

In June of 1990, as a two-star major general, McCaffrey was put in charge of the 24th Infantry Division (Mechanized), at Fort Stewart, Georgia. He was then forty-seven, and the Army's youngest division commander. Two months later, Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait, and McCaffrey took the 24th's tanks, guns, and more than eighteen thousand soldiers (eventually, there were twenty-six thousand) from its home base to Saudi Arabia in preparation for the Persian Gulf War. The 24th's mission was to drive more than two hundred miles into Iraq—the famed "left hook" maneuver—and block the retreat of Iraqi forces from the war zone in Kuwait. In an account written after the war, *U.S. News & World Report* praised McCaffrey for leading what one officer called "the greatest cavalry charge in history." More promotions came McCaffrey's way, and he eventually earned four stars, the Army's highest peacetime rank.

McCaffrey announced his retirement from the Army in January of 1996, when President Clinton brought him into the Cabinet as the director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy. In that position, McCaffrey serves as the architect of and main spokesman for the Clinton Administration's $1.6-billion plan to provide, among other things, more training and weapons for the Colombian Army in an effort to cut drug production and export.

The Iraqis offered only disorganized and ragged opposition to the American invasion, in February of 1991, and the much feared ground war quickly turned into a bloody rout, with many of the retreating Iraqi units, including the élite Republican Guard, being pounded by American aircraft, artillery, and tanks as they fled north in panic along a six-lane road from Kuwait City to Basra, the major military stronghold in southern Iraq. The road became littered with blackened tanks, trucks, and bodies; the news media called it the "highway of death." The devastation, which was televised around the world, became a symbol of the extent of the Iraqi defeat—and of American military superiority—and it was publicly cited as a factor in President George Bush's decision, on February 28th, to declare a cessation of hostilities, ending the killing, and to call for peace talks. That decision, which is still controversial today, enabled Saddam's Army to survive the war with many units intact, and helped keep the regime in power. In "The Generals' War," by Michael R. Gordon and Bernard E. Trainor, Bush explained that he and his advisers were concerned about two aspects of the situation: "If we continued the fighting another day, until the ring was completely closed, would we be accused of a slaughter of Iraqis who were simply trying to escape, not fight? In addition, the coalition was agreed on driving the Iraqis from Kuwait, not on carrying the conflict into Iraq or on destroying Iraqi forces."

The ground war had lasted one hundred hours, and there had been a total of seventy-nine American deaths, eight of them in McCaffrey's 24th Division. On the morning of March 2nd, a day before the Iraqis and the Allied coalition were scheduled to begin formal peace talks, McCaffrey reported that, despite the ceasefire, his division had suddenly come under attack from a retreating Republican Guard tank division off Highway 8 west of Basra, near the Rumaila oil field. The Iraqis were driving toward a causeway over Lake Hammar, one of five exit routes from the Euphrates River Valley to the safety of Baghdad. Overriding a warning from the division operations officer, McCaffrey ordered an assault in force—an all-out attack. His decision stunned some officers in the Allied command structure in Saudi Arabia, and provoked unease in Washington. Apache attack helicopters, Bradley fighting vehicles, and artillery units from the 24th Division pummelled the five-mile-long Iraqi column for hours, destroying some seven hundred Iraqi tanks, armored cars, and trucks, and killing not only Iraqi soldiers but civilians and children as well. Many of the dead were buried soon after the engagement, and no accurate count of the victims could be made. McCaffrey later described the carnage as "one of the most astounding scenes of destruction I have ever participated in." There were no serious American combat casualties.

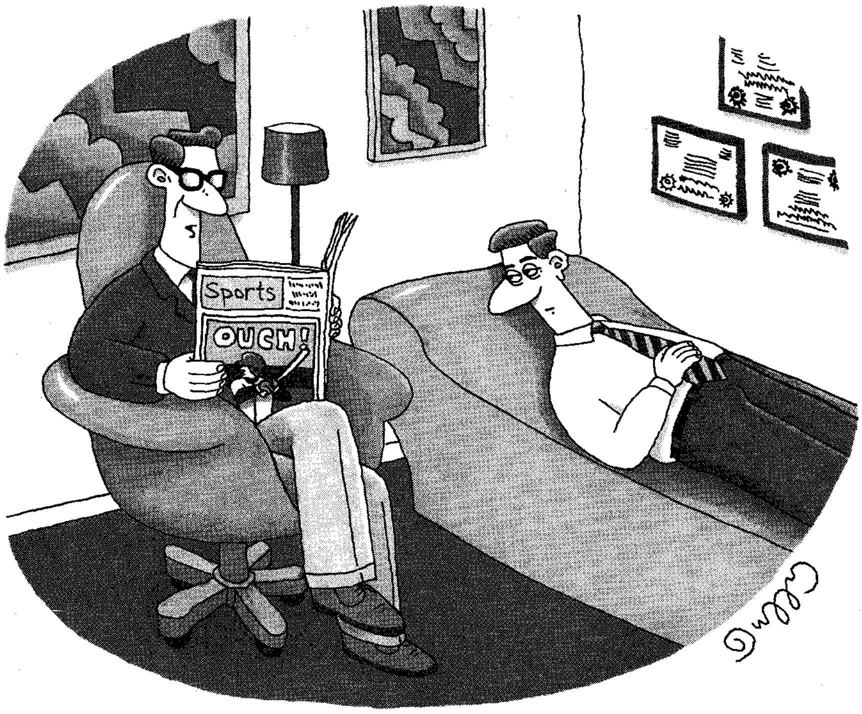
McCaffrey's assault was one of the biggest—and most one-sided—of the Gulf War, but no journalists appear to have been in the area at the time, and, unlike the "highway of death," it did not produce pictures and descriptions that immediately appeared on international

SCOTT DALTON/AP WIDE WORLD

television and in the world press. Under Defense Department rules that had been accepted, under protest, by the major media, reporters were not permitted on the Gulf War battlefields without military escorts. The day after the assault, a few journalists were flown by helicopter to McCaffrey's headquarters. When McCaffrey met with them, he speculated that the retreating Iraqi units that had mounted the seemingly suicidal attack were unaware of the ceasefire, then in its second day. "Some might not even know we are here," McCaffrey told a reporter for United Press International. "But perhaps there are some out there just looking for a fight." Most of the journalists shared McCaffrey's enthusiasm. "Not having been there and seen with my own eyes," Joe Galloway, of *U.S. News & World Report*, told me, "I think it was a righteous shoot. The Iraqis shouldn't have opened fire. They should have walked out."

Two months later, in public testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, which had invited him to discuss the lessons the military had learned from the war, McCaffrey gave a graphic account of the battle. It was a time of national pride in America's performance in the conflict, and McCaffrey was praised effusively by the senators. He told them that the days just after the ceasefire were confused, as Iraqi tanks, trucks, and soldiers abandoned Kuwait and fled toward Baghdad along Highway 8. The area west of Basra—a vast tract of wadis and unoccupied desert—was especially chaotic in the predawn hours of March 2nd. "There were lots of people moving in the dark," he said. "They engaged us with R.P.G. rockets"—antitank grenades.

McCaffrey did not give the senators any details about the strength of the initial Iraqi attack, but he depicted the enemy soldiers' performance during the war as, for the most part, aggressive and eager. "They tried to fight," he said. "They fired hundreds of artillery rounds at us. Most of my tracks"—armored vehicles—"were hit by small-arms fire. They fired tanks, Saggers, et cetera." Saggers are antitank missiles. Referring to the situation on March 2nd, he told the senators, "I elected to destroy the force that was in this area. . . . Then we attacked. And between six-thirty in the morning and about noon, one brigade, three tank task forces conducted a classic attack with five artillery battalions in support." Of the Iraqis, he said, "We destroyed all of them. Most of them, in my judgment, only fought for fifteen minutes to thirty minutes. Most of them fled." He continued, "Once we had them bottled up, up here at the causeway, there was no way out."



"That's my best advice to you, Mr. Gilbert. Try not to reject it out of hand simply because it also happens to be Mike Lupica's advice to the Mets."

The senators were deferential and asked McCaffrey no critical questions about any aspects of the March 2nd engagement, which has come to be known as the Battle of the Causeway, the Battle of Rumaila, and, because of the number of destroyed Iraqi vehicles strewn about, the Battle of the Junkyard.

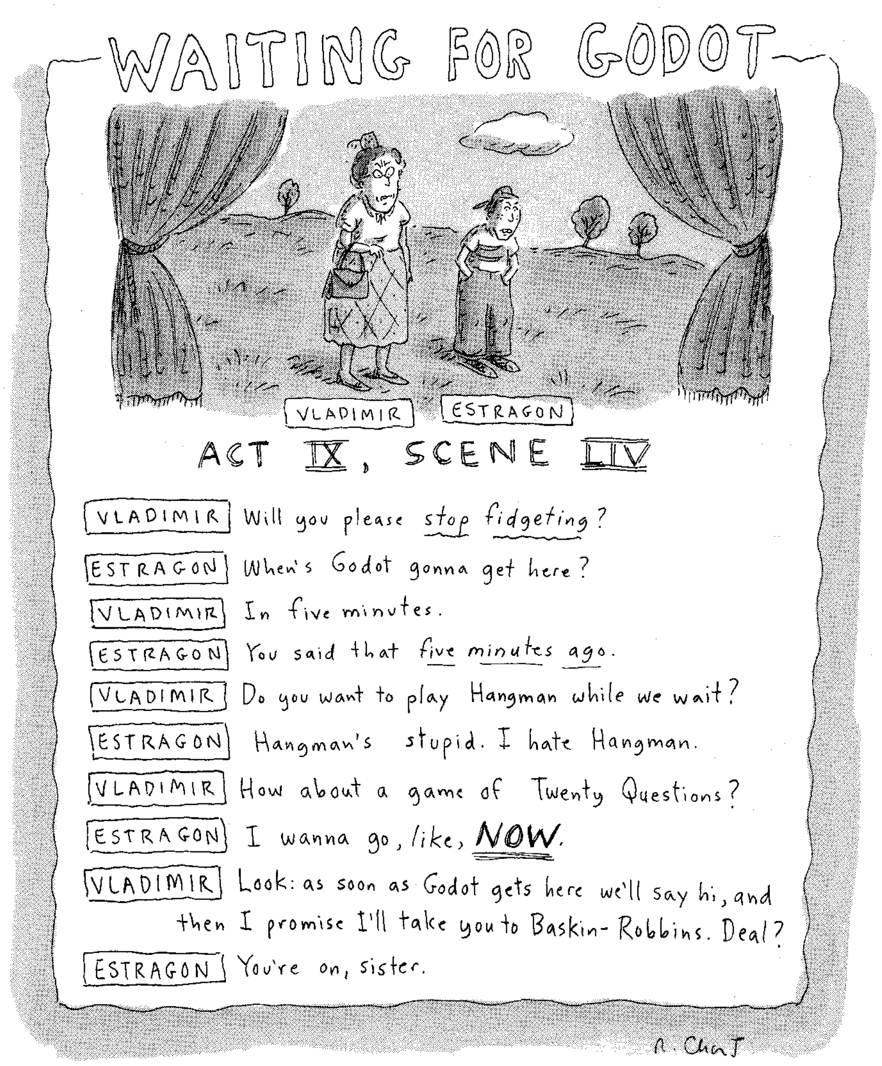
McCaffrey refused to be interviewed for this article, but he did agree, through his legal counsel, to respond to written questions. Asked about the battle, he wrote, "I believe that my actions at Rumaila were completely appropriate and warranted in order to defend my troops against unknown and largely unknowable enemy forces and intentions. If I had not proceeded as I did and had American soldiers of the 24th ID [Infantry Division] suffered substantial casualties, postwar analysts would not be asking if I acted too aggressively, but would rightly condemn me for sitting still in the face of a possible major enemy attack."

McCaffrey's insistence that the Iraqis attacked first was disputed in interviews for this article by some of his subordinates in the wartime headquarters of the 24th Division, and also by soldiers and officers who were at the scene on March 2nd. The accounts of these men, taken together, suggest that McCaffrey's offensive, two days into a ceasefire, was not so much a counterattack provoked by enemy fire as a systematic destruction of Iraqis who were generally fulfilling the requirements of the retreat; most of the Iraqi tanks travelled from the battlefield with their cannons reversed and secured, in a position known as travel-lock. According to these witnesses, the 24th faced little determined Iraqi resistance at any point during the war or its aftermath; they also said that McCaffrey and other senior officers exaggerated the extent of Iraqi resistance throughout the war.

A few months after the division returned home, an anonymous letter accusing McCaffrey of a series of war crimes arrived at the Pentagon. It startled the Army's top leadership and led to an official investigation into McCaffrey's conduct of the war. The letter directly accused McCaffrey's division of having launched the March 2nd assault without Iraqi provocation. A 24th Division combat unit was said to have "slaughtered" Iraqi prisoners of war after a battle. The letter was filled with information, including portions of what were said to be recorded communications between McCaffrey and his field commanders, that could have come only from the inner circle. The anonymous letter writer alleged that McCaffrey had covered up the extent of "friendly fire" casualties within his division, and claimed that he had chosen to award a combat badge to a close aide who had not served in a combat unit.

By midsummer of 1991, the 24th Division's 1st Brigade had quietly investigated two earlier complaints at Fort Stewart about alleged atrocities, and determined that neither complaint had merit. The most serious allegation involved the shooting of prisoners by soldiers in the 1st Brigade. In one case, a soldier attached to a Scout platoon reported that more than three hundred and fifty captured and disarmed Iraqi soldiers, including Iraqi wounded who had been evacuated from a clearly marked hospital bus, were fired upon by a platoon of Bradley fighting vehicles. It was not known how many of the Iraqis survived, if any. The second accusation came from a group of soldiers assigned to the 124th Military Intelligence Battalion, whose senior sergeant claimed that on March 1st, the day after the ceasefire, he saw an American combat team open fire with machine guns upon a group of Iraqis in civilian clothes who were waving a white sheet of surrender. The precise number killed was not known, but eyewitnesses estimated that there were at least fifteen or twenty in the group, perhaps more. Neither alleged incident was reported by the 24th Division to the appropriate higher authorities, as was mandated by the Army's operations order for the Gulf War.

The allegations couldn't have come at a more inopportune time. General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, commander of the Allied forces, and General Colin L. Powell, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, were national heroes. And their success in Kuwait was seen as validation for the "Powell doctrine"—the use of overwhelming force at the outset of a war in order to minimize casualties and avoid the incremental buildup that had cost so dearly in Vietnam.


WAITING FOR GODOT
VLADIMIR
ESTRAGON
ACT IX, SCENE LIV
VLADIMIR Will you please stop fidgeting?
ESTRAGON When's Godot gonna get here?
VLADIMIR In five minutes.
ESTRAGON You said that five minutes ago.
VLADIMIR Do you want to play Hangman while we wait?
ESTRAGON Hangman's stupid. I hate Hangman.
VLADIMIR How about a game of Twenty Questions?
ESTRAGON I wanna go, like, NOW.
VLADIMIR Look: as soon as Godot gets here we'll say hi, and then I promise I'll take you to Baskin-Robbins. Deal?
ESTRAGON You're on, sister.
R. Chast

McCaffrey's harshest critics are fellow Army generals who served as division commanders in the Gulf War. McCaffrey was widely believed to be Schwarzkopf's favorite general (Schwarzkopf had previously served as commander of the 24th) and was viewed as being indifferent to the wishes of Lieutenant General Gary Luck, the commander of XVIII Airborne Corps. (XVIII Corps included three divisions: the 24th, the 82nd Airborne, and the 101st Airborne.) Other commanders in the Corps were occasionally involved in bitter disputes with McCaffrey over what they perceived as the 24th's hoarding of precious tank and truck fuel. These officers, with some exceptions, castigated the March 2nd assault and expressed dismay over McCaffrey's subsequent promotion to full general. "There was no need to be shooting at anybody," Lieutenant General James H. Johnson, Jr. (Ret.), of Sarasota, Florida, said. "They couldn't surrender fast enough. The war was over." Johnson commanded the 82nd Airborne, and his initial assignment was essentially the same as McCaffrey's—to protect the western flank of the war zone. "I saw no need to continue any further attacks," Johnson told me, adding that his troops processed hundreds of Iraqi soldiers and displaced persons on March 2nd, with no incidents or casualties on either side. McCaffrey, he said, "does what he wants to do."

The officer in charge of enforcing the ceasefire was Lieutenant General John J. Yeosock (Ret.), who recalled that General Schwarzkopf "was explicit about the cessation of offensive operations" after President Bush's declaration of a unilateral ceasefire, on February 28th. A day or two later, Yeosock flew from the main Allied command post, in Saudi Arabia, to Kuwait City and then took a helicopter tour of the war zone, south of Basra, where he saw abandoned equipment and Iraqi prisoners being evacuated on the roads to Baghdad but no or-

• •

ganized Iraqi units. "What Barry ended up doing was fighting sand dunes and moving rapidly," Yeosock said. He was "looking for a battle."

Lieutenant General Ronald Griffith, who commanded the 1st Armored Division of VII Corps, told me it was well known that many of the Iraqi tanks destroyed by the 24th Division on March 2nd were being transported by trailer truck to Baghdad, with their cannons facing backward. "It was just a bunch of tanks in a train, and he made it a battle," Griffith said of McCaffrey. "He made it a battle when it was never one. That's the thing that bothered me the most."

Many of the generals interviewed for this account believe that McCaffrey's attack went too far, and violated one of the most fundamental military doctrines: that a commander must respond in proportion to the threat. "That's the way we're trained," one major general said. "A single shot does not signal a battle to the death. Commanders just don't willy-nilly launch on something like that. A disciplined commander is going to figure out who fired it, and where it came from. Especially if your mission is to enforce a cease-fire. Who should have been better able to instill fire discipline than McCaffrey?"

Although McCaffrey refused repeated requests for an interview to discuss these accusations, more than three hundred interviews in the past six months with Gulf War veterans and Army investigators have produced evidence that the Army's inquiries into the 24th Division failed to uncover many important elements of the story.

MORE THAN A COMMANDER

By all accounts, McCaffrey was one of the Army's most knowledgeable commanders, a confident and savvy leader who understood in detail the workings of every phase of a combat infantry division. Like most generals, he wanted things done his way, and, as the colonels and lieutenant colonels in his command quickly learned, he gave no middle ground. Lieutenant Colonel Edward J. (Butch) Brennan (Ret.) was a staff officer in the tactical-operations center, traditionally a division's most important administrative unit. "A guy like McCaffrey can be intimidating," Brennan told me. "He believes that what's good for him is good for the country." Brennan went on, "The No. 1 thing to McCaffrey is loyalty. If you don't have three-hundred-percent loyalty, you're not part of the game."

One of McCaffrey's favorites was John Le Moyne, a colonel who shortly before the Gulf War was promoted from a division staff job to be commander of the 1st Brigade, one of three front-line fighting brigades in the division. There was an immediate affinity between the General and the Colonel. "I like John," one senior division officer recalled McCaffrey saying before the war. "I'm going to make this guy a general." Le Moyne and other officers who prospered under McCaffrey depict him in glowing terms. Le Moyne told me during a telephone interview that McCaffrey was, "without doubt, the most dramatic and charismatic leader I've served." Le Moyne, now a major general and the commander of the Army's Infantry Training Center, at Fort Benning, Georgia, said that McCaffrey scorned the easy way and always did things "for the right reason. He's earned our undying love and respect."

Another admirer is Lieutenant General James Terry Scott (Ret.), who is now the director of the national-security program at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government; he served in the war as a one-star assistant division commander. "He's a guy of high character and high standards, who doesn't make things up and doesn't cover up," Scott said. "Anyone who stands out in the Army draws fire. A lot of generals were jealous and feared him. They saw him as a guy who would break rice bowls and change things." During the war, Scott said, McCaffrey was "the best division-level tactician I've ever seen. He was very bold—and he never ran out of gas."

With the Gulf War unfolding, the 24th Division headquarters became increasingly tense, as some of McCaffrey's subordinates felt that they were forced to choose between doing the right thing, as they saw it, or doing what their commanding officer ordered. Four senior officers—three colonels and a lieutenant colonel, all of whom had expectations of becoming generals—found it impossible to go along with McCaffrey's directives, his management style, and his battlefield decisions, and openly questioned him. They did so knowing that they were jeopardizing their careers.

In December of 1990, McCaffrey chose Colonel Ronald E. Townsend to be artillery commander of the 24th Division, a job that put Townsend in charge of six field groups of long-range cannons. Townsend recalled that when he arrived McCaffrey told him, "My job is to make you a brigadier general." Sometimes such enticements were communicated indirectly. The wife of Colonel Theodore Reid, the commander of the division's 197th Brigade, recalled that, at a social gathering at Fort Stewart, McCaffrey whispered to her, "I have great plans for Ted." But Townsend and Reid found themselves in chronic dispute with McCaffrey, mainly because, in their view, he didn't delegate, interfering in the jobs of his commanders and making all the key military decisions himself. "McCaffrey and I had our differences," Reid told me. "Do I respect him? Hell, no." By the war's end, Townsend had defied a direct order from McCaffrey concerning the reassignment of a valued senior officer; Reid, during a meeting with the General, had ordered his staff to clear the room and "had it out" with him for twenty minutes. "I blew off my career, and I knew it," Reid told me.

The commander of the division's aviation brigade, Colonel Burt Tackaberry, said to me, "You couldn't tell McCaffrey anything, or disagree with him." Tackaberry had been around generals all his life—his father was a lieutenant general—and he felt that McCaffrey wasn't letting him do his job. His interactions with the division commander were professional, he added. McCaffrey always maintained his poise—unlike Schwarzkopf, who was known throughout the Gulf as "the Screamer"—and yet, Tackaberry said, he "knew how to hurt you without raising his voice." After the war, Tackaberry said, he told McCaffrey, "If you don't have trust in me, you ought to find another commander."

Two months before the ground war, McCaffrey abruptly relieved Lieutenant Colonel Arnold J. Canada as commander of the 2-7 Battalion in Le Moyne's 1st Brigade, and replaced him with Lieutenant Colonel Charles C. Ware, who had been serving as the division's Inspector General—a headquarters job. Canada was stunned; he had commanded the battalion for two years, he told me, and was fully prepared to lead it into war—a view echoed by many of his soldiers in interviews with me. "It would be like taking a conductor out of an orchestra just before a big concert," one battalion soldier said. "Yes, the orchestra can still play the music, but there's less understanding of the skills and abilities of the people in the orchestra—less perfect music." Changing the command, many soldiers feared, would inevitably diminish the battalion's ability to function in combat; Ware had little time to gain its confidence.

The 24th's lieutenants knew nothing of the tensions at the top. They were far too involved in the day-to-day operations of their platoons. It's always difficult for outsiders to get an accurate picture of life at the platoon level of an Army combat unit; in the case of the Gulf War, where journalists were effectively prohibited from the front lines, it is almost impossibly difficult, but two compelling accounts have been published. "Tuskers" (Darlington; 1997) was written by Major David S. Pierson, who served as a task-force intelligence captain in the 24th's 1st Brigade. (The title refers to the battalion's nickname.) "The Eyes of Orion" (Kent State; 1999) is a collection of remembrances by five 2nd Brigade platoon leaders, with an eloquent introduction by McCaffrey. ("This is a story of courage, dedication, and agonizing self-doubts as these young officers faced the gut-wrenching responsibility of leading platoons through the enormous confusion, fear, and physical fatigue of high-intensity combat operations.") The books revolve around the life of the combat soldier—the rigors of training, the harsh conditions of the desert, and the constant fear of death.

As portrayed in these books, McCaffrey is an autocratic father figure who exhorts his young officers, "You are going to kick their ass and be home in time for supper!" Before the war began, McCaffrey made a series of morale-boosting visits to his combat battalions, introducing a kill-or-be-killed theme. Pierson reproduces one of these talks in "Tuskers": "This won't be a walk in the woods," McCaffrey says. "These boys have the fourth largest army in the world. They're not going to just roll over. I fully expect we will have ten percent casualties in the first week. . . . You're going to have to prepare yourself for that."

As McCaffrey spoke, Pierson writes, he found himself looking at the General's wounded arm. McCaffrey "became larger than life and his persona took on mythical proportions. He was more than a commander, he was a legend." McCaffrey concluded the pep talk by urging the young officers "to protect yourselves out there," and issued what amounted to a standing order—a sort of foxhole version of the Powell doctrine. "If you're driving through a village and someone throws a rock at you, shoot them! If they shoot at you, turn the tank main gun on them. If they use anything larger than small arms, call for artillery. It's as simple as that. Obey the rules of war but protect yourself." Pierson and his fellow-soldiers were inspired: "He had fanned the embers of the warrior spirit into a flame."

THE ENEMY

The ground war began for the 24th Division on the afternoon of February 24th. From that moment, McCaffrey was always on the move, driving in a specially equipped assault vehicle or flying in a helicopter to stay near the action. His headquarters was situated in the division's tactical command post, a collection of perhaps fifty tanks and armored carriers that moved forward with the troops. These troops were superbly trained and highly motivated. Tanks, armored cars, and trucks, including more than four hundred huge fuel tankers, drove relentlessly, day and night, covering nearly two hundred miles in two days and reaching their objective, the Euphrates River Valley, more than a full day ahead of schedule.

After the war, according to "Tuskers," McCaffrey told Pierson's battalion that the 24th Division had accomplished "absolutely one of the most astounding goddamned operations ever seen in the history of military science. . . . We were not fighting the Danish Armed Forces up here. There were a half million of these assholes that were extremely well armed and equipped." At an Army infantry conference at Fort Benning, in April, McCaffrey went further. According to the official talking points of the conference, he said that there was "heavy resistance" for parts of two days, as the 24th was confronted by three Iraqi infantry divisions and a commando brigade.

There were American casualties, of course, but there seems to have been little or no organized resistance in the 24th's area of operations—only the remnants of a military force that was in retreat. It may be the case that no soldier from the 24th Division died at the hands of the Iraqis. Scrutiny of the available records reveals that at least four of the division's eight officially reported deaths were the result of friendly fire, and, on March 3rd, the day McCaffrey briefed the American press corps on his victory at Rumaila, a U.P.I. dispatch reported that the division said that there had been no combat deaths in the ground war. By the war's end, many soldiers told me, fear of being shot by friendly fire far outweighed fear of the Iraqis.

"We met the enemy," 1st Lieutenant Greg Downey, one of the 2nd Brigade's "Eyes of Orion" diarists, recalled on the second day of the ground war. "My gunner reported targets. We moved closer, discovering the Iraqi soldiers to be young boys and old men. They were a sad sight, with absolutely no fight left in them. Their leaders had cut their Achilles' tendons so they couldn't run away and then left them. What weapons they had were in bad repair and little ammunition was on hand. They were hungry, cold, and scared. The hate I had for any Iraqi dissipated. These people had no business being on a battlefield."

One of his fellow platoon leaders and diarists, 2nd Lieutenant Rob Holmes, a 1989 West Point graduate, spotted a small building and a water trailer in the distance, and his superior officer ordered him to open fire with a machine gun. "I figured why not—this is combat," he wrote in "Orion." He missed but then fired an antitank rocket into the building, caving in a wall. "Immediately dozens of Iraqi infantry appeared and scattered. . . . We cut loose with machine guns from all of our tanks at the Iraqi infantry in front of us." Holmes ordered a second volley of fire into the building. It burst into flames. "A few Iraqis ran out a door," and one of Holmes's gunners "cut them down, riddling them with machine gun bullets." The American soldiers stopped firing when the Iraqis threw up their hands, and the survivors were rounded up. Now Holmes, too, was appalled at the condition of his enemy. "Our new prisoners barely qualified as soldiers. They were poorly clothed and hardly equipped. They looked gaunt and undisciplined. They were very old and very young. They looked pathetic. Quite a contrast with us."

The 24th Division veterans interviewed for this article consistently described the Iraqi opposition as far less daunting than expected. A few Iraqi stragglers brandished weapons, after being fired upon by machine guns from the fast-moving American tanks, but they quickly surrendered or were cut down. Most veterans saw no firefights, and no attempts to attack directly any of the American tanks as they rolled over the sand dunes. The 2nd Brigade's most dramatic moment came early on the morning of February 27th, when a large tank group from the brigade, after firing an intensive artillery barrage, crashed through the chain-link fences surrounding Jalibah Airfield, near Highway 8, and stormed down the runway, destroying Iraqi tanks and aircraft. Iraqi soldiers guarding the base were overrun and isolated. Some fought bravely, if foolishly, firing rifles and automatic weapons at the tanks. One American soldier was wounded in the arm. The Iraqi soldiers "tried to hide in shallow bunkers and some tried to surrender," according to another "Orion" diarist, 2nd Lieutenant Neal Creighton, also a 1989 graduate of West Point. "Most that moved were quickly cut down under a swath of machine gun fire. The burning helicopters, jets and dead soldiers seemed almost unreal. . . . My soldiers were alive. It was the happiest moment of my life."

But suddenly, after the airport was secured, three American Bradleys were hit by a barrage of rockets. According to Rob Holmes in "Orion," the rockets had been fired not by Iraqis but by "another unit of American tanks, nearly two miles away." Two men were killed—victims of friendly fire—and eight or nine more were injured. "Americans had been killed by Americans," Holmes wrote. "I saw the horrible sight of full body bags for the first time. . . . I just wanted to finish this job and get back to Georgia."

In the official Desert Storm chronology for XVIII Corps, as posted on the Internet by the Army, the 24th Division reports only that it overcame light resistance in seizing the airfield and that ten soldiers were wounded in action when an armored vehicle was "struck by an artillery round." The division's authorized history, published after its return to Fort Stewart, describes the Jalibah Airfield attack as "brilliantly executed," and notes that McCaffrey flew to the area to congratulate the brigade commander of the mission on his "superb victory." There is no mention of friendly-fire casualties.

Like the soldiers in the 2nd Brigade, those in the 1st Brigade were astonished by the enemy's reluctance to fight. Pierson eventually began to feel guilty: "guilty that we had slaughtered them so; guilty that we had performed so well and they so poorly; guilty that we were running up the score. . . . They were like children fleeing before us, unorganized, scared, wishing it all would end. We continued to pour it on."

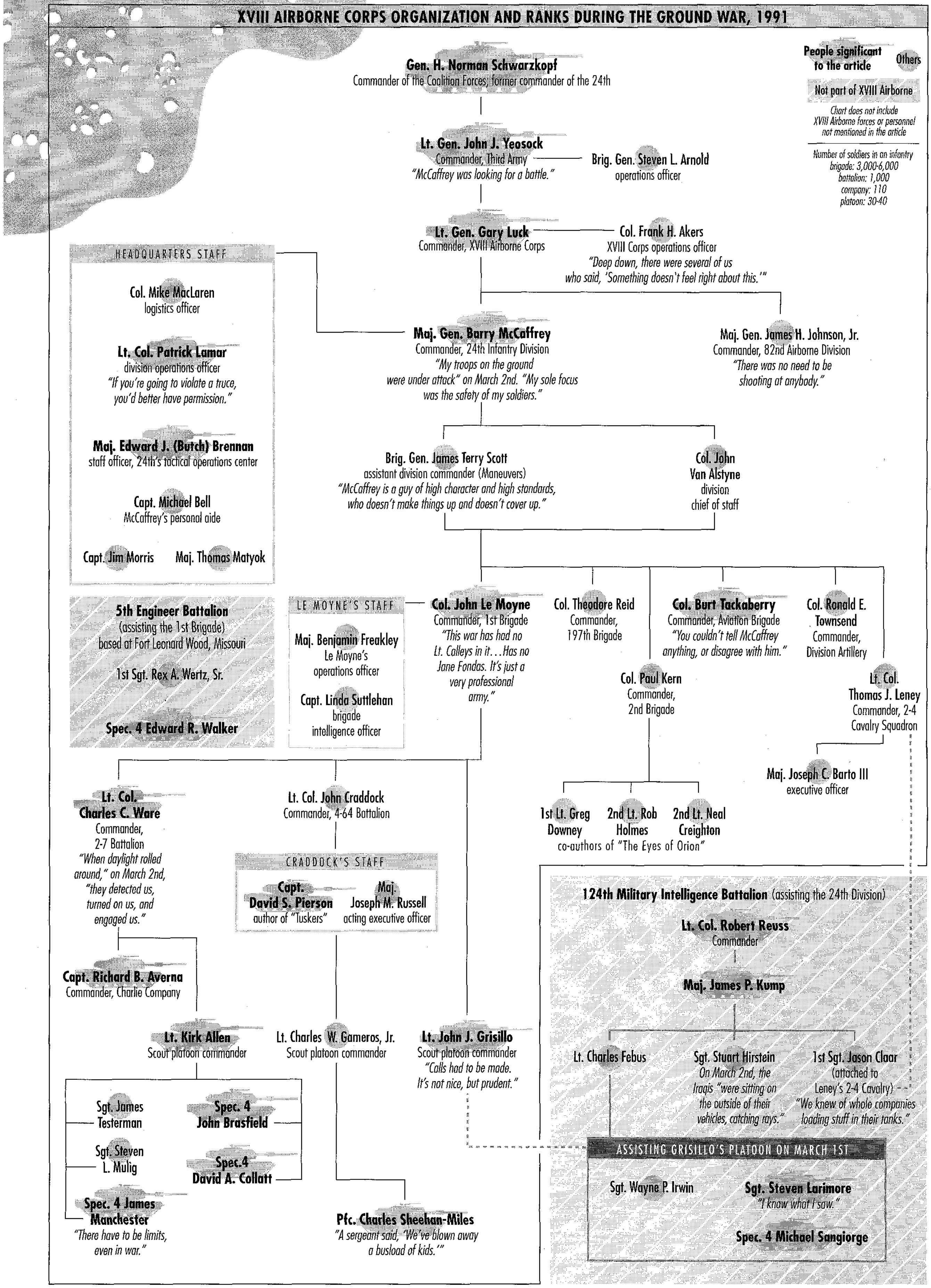
Private First Class Charles Sheehan-Miles, a tanker in the 1st Brigade who served as a gun loader, was, by all accounts, a competent soldier, a "squared away" type. A native of Georgia, he enjoyed his work and was eager for an Army career. That changed on the third day of the war. "I'd been up for two days and was totally exhausted," Sheehan-Miles told me. There was a radio report from the company commander about Iraqi trucks ahead. As Sheehan-Miles watched, one of the vehicles, carrying fuel, was struck by an American shell and burst into flames. Gasoline splashed into a nearby truck crammed with Iraqis. "Twenty or thirty people came out of the truck," Sheehan-Miles recalled. "They were in flames. We opened fire."

When I asked Sheehan-Miles why he fired, he replied, "At that point, we were shooting everything. Guys in the company told me later that some were civilians. It wasn't like they came at us with a gun. It was that they were there—in the wrong place at the wrong time."

Although Sheehan-Miles is unsure

NIGEL HOLMES

XVIII AIRBORNE CORPS ORGANIZATION AND RANKS DURING THE GROUND WAR, 1991



People significant to the article

Others

Not part of XVIII Airborne

Chart does not include XVIII Airborne forces or personnel not mentioned in the article

Number of soldiers in an infantry
brigade: 3,000-6,000
battalion: 1,000
company: 110
platoon: 30-40

Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf
Commander of the Coalition Forces, former commander of the 24th

Lt. Gen. John J. Yeosock
Commander, Third Army
"McCaffrey was looking for a battle."

Brig. Gen. Steven L. Arnold
operations officer

Lt. Gen. Gary Luck
Commander, XVIII Airborne Corps

Col. Frank H. Akers
XVIII Corps operations officer
"Deep down, there were several of us who said, 'Something doesn't feel right about this.'"

HEADQUARTERS STAFF

Col. Mike MacLaren
logistics officer

Lt. Col. Patrick Lamar
division operations officer
"If you're going to violate a truce, you'd better have permission."

Maj. Edward J. (Butch) Brennan
staff officer, 24th's tactical operations center

Capt. Michael Bell
McCaffrey's personal aide

Capt. Jim Morris

Maj. Thomas Matyok

Maj. Gen. Barry McCaffrey
Commander, 24th Infantry Division
"My troops on the ground were under attack" on March 2nd. "My sole focus was the safety of my soldiers."

Maj. Gen. James H. Johnson, Jr.
Commander, 82nd Airborne Division
"There was no need to be shooting at anybody."

Brig. Gen. James Terry Scott
assistant division commander (Maneuvers)
"McCaffrey is a guy of high character and high standards, who doesn't make things up and doesn't cover up."

Col. John Van Alstyne
division chief of staff

5th Engineer Battalion
(assisting the 1st Brigade)
based at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri

1st Sgt. Rex A. Wertz, Sr.

Spec. 4 Edward R. Walker

LE MOYNE'S STAFF

Maj. Benjamin Freakley
Le Moyne's operations officer

Capt. Linda Suttlehan
brigade intelligence officer

Col. John Le Moyne
Commander, 1st Brigade
"This war has had no Lt. Calleys in it…Has no Jane Fondas. It's just a very professional army."

Col. Theodore Reid
Commander, 197th Brigade

Col. Burt Tackaberry
Commander, Aviation Brigade
"You couldn't tell McCaffrey anything, or disagree with him."

Col. Ronald E. Townsend
Commander, Division Artillery

Col. Paul Kern
Commander, 2nd Brigade

Lt. Col. Thomas J. Leney
Commander, 2-4 Cavalry Squadron

Maj. Joseph C. Barto III
executive officer

1st Lt. Greg Downey

2nd Lt. Rob Holmes

2nd Lt. Neal Creighton

co-authors of "The Eyes of Orion"

Lt. Col. Charles C. Ware
Commander, 2-7 Battalion
"When daylight rolled around," on March 2nd, "they detected us, turned on us, and engaged us."

Lt. Col. John Craddock
Commander, 4-64 Battalion

CRADDOCK'S STAFF

Capt. David S. Pierson
author of "Tuskers"

Maj. Joseph M. Russell
acting executive officer

Capt. Richard B. Averna
Commander, Charlie Company

Lt. Kirk Allen
Scout platoon commander

Lt. Charles W. Gameros, Jr.
Scout platoon commander

Lt. John J. Grisillo
Scout platoon commander
"Calls had to be made. It's not nice, but prudent."

Sgt. James Testerman

Spec. 4 John Brasfield

Sgt. Steven L. Mulig

Spec. 4 David A. Collatt

Spec. 4 James Manchester
"There have to be limits, even in war."

Pfc. Charles Sheehan-Miles
"A sergeant said, 'We've blown away a busload of kids.'"

124th Military Intelligence Battalion (assisting the 24th Division)

Lt. Col. Robert Reuss
Commander

Maj. James P. Kump

Lt. Charles Febus

Sgt. Stuart Hirstein
On March 2nd, the Iraqis "were sitting on the outside of their vehicles, catching rays."

1st Sgt. Jason Claar
(attached to Leney's 2-4 Cavalry)
"We knew of whole companies loading stuff in their tanks."

ASSISTING GRISILLO'S PLATOON ON MARCH 1ST

Sgt. Wayne P. Irwin

Sgt. Steven Larimore
"I know what I saw."

Spec. 4 Michael Sangiorge

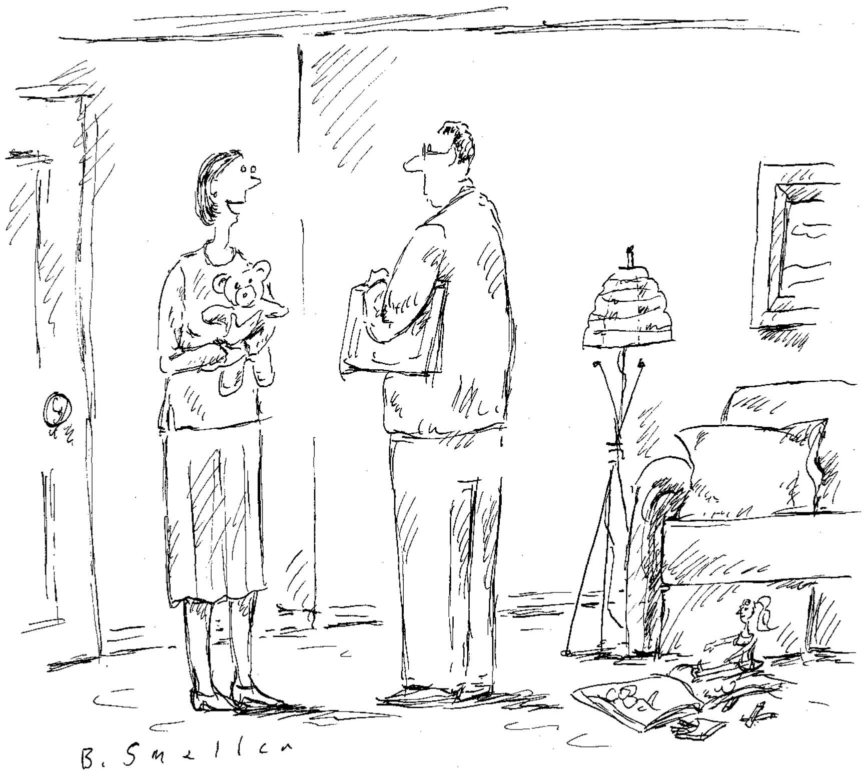
whether he and his fellow-tankers were ever actually fired upon during the war, he is sure that there was no significant enemy fire. "We took some incoming once, but it was friendly fire," he said. "The folks we fought never had a chance." He came away from Iraq convinced that he and his fellow-soldiers were, as another tanker put it, part of "the biggest firing squad in history."

THE HOSPITAL BUS

Scouts had the war's most dangerous duty, and the job enthralled twenty-one-year-old Specialist 4 James Manchester, who was the son, grandson, and great-grandson of U.S. Army officers. Manchester was assigned to the Scout platoon in the 2-7 Battalion of the 1st Brigade—the battalion commanded by the newly assigned Charles Ware. The platoon had six Humvees and two Bradley fighting vehicles, which operated as many as ten kilometres in advance of the main force, seeking out the enemy and serving as a screen in case of attack. It was a glamorous, high-risk assignment. In a major attack, the Scouts understood that they were to fight to the last man, if necessary, to buy time for the main force.

Manchester had excellent qualifications for the job. After enlisting, in 1988, he had gone through Airborne training and the Ranger program, and was offered an appointment to West Point, an honor accorded to only several dozen enlisted men each year. As the drive across the desert continued, Manchester told me, he and his fellow-Scouts began to fear friendly fire more than they did the Iraqis. He recalled that, in the first days of the war, his thirty-man platoon had been involved in only a few dustups, including one that began when the driver of an Iraqi truck fired at the American position. The truck was quickly destroyed, and Manchester and Edward R. Walker, a fellow-Scout who had emergency-medical training, attended to the wounded driver.

On February 27th, the fourth day of the war, Manchester's platoon was ordered to block traffic on a road near Highway 8 while the battalion's five companies of Bradleys and tanks were refuelled by tanker trucks. The battalion was at its most vulnerable for those few hours, and nothing was to get by the Scouts' roadblock. The operation was proceeding routinely, with vehicles beginning to line up along the road. Then, Manchester said, "this person comes walking toward us, wearing red running pants." It was an English-speaking Egyptian, who was serving in the Iraqi Army. He wanted to surrender, as did several other Iraqi soldiers who were with him. The American soldiers were soon inundated with Iraqis, who streamed out of the desert in a caravan of automobiles and trucks, most of them apparently stolen in Kuwait. The Iraqis were "scared and crying," Manchester remembered. "A Buick comes up, with the commander, and he surrenders his battalion to us." The Scout platoon, confronted by a large number of hungry and thirsty Iraqis, maintained its composure. One of the Iraqi trucks came barrelling toward the group from the desert, and its driver seemed to have no intention of stopping. He was not shot at, Manchester said. Instead, one of the Scouts fired a volley of bullets into the air. The truck stopped, and its unharmed driver joined the other prisoners. All the Iraqis were searched for weapons and, once cleared, were seated in a large circle. "We were doing it by the book," Manchester told me. "We told them that everything was going to be fine."



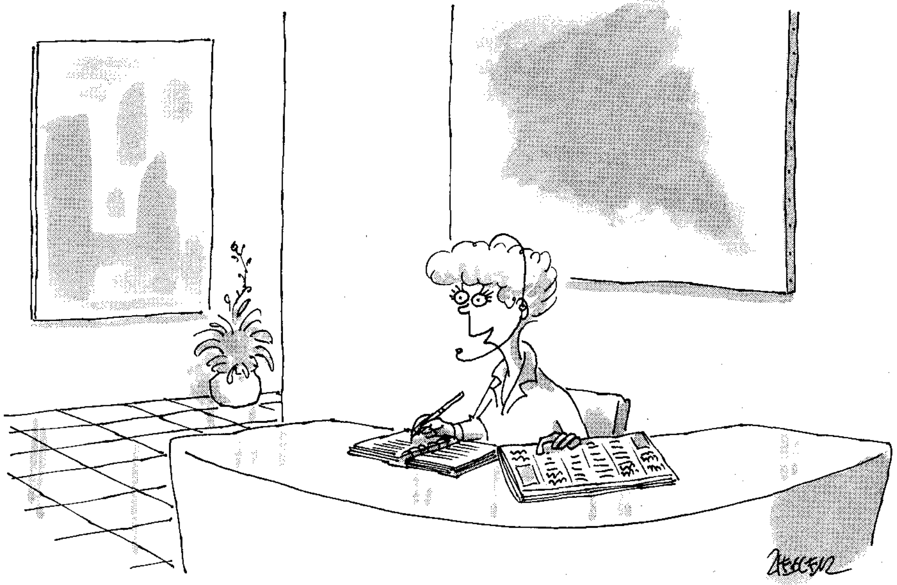
"Our little girl is growing up—this very morning she told me she hates me."

In the confusion, Manchester, who was assigned to the lead vehicle, with Lieutenant Kirk Allen, the platoon commander, got separated from his teammates. Allen's driver, Specialist 4 John Brasfield, a wiry twenty-four-year-old Kansan, joined Edward Walker and a few other soldiers who were stopping the traffic along the road. One of the first vehicles to pull up, Brasfield recalled, was an Iraqi hospital bus, marked with a crescent—the Iraqi equivalent of a Red Cross sign. Four Scouts recalled that the bus was filled with wounded Iraqi veterans, many of them bandaged. Another Scout recalled that the wounded were piled in the back of a truck that trailed behind. Doctors and male nurses were among the prisoners. "There was a doctor on the bus who could speak English and was real friendly," Brasfield told me. Brasfield had served as a legal specialist in the Reserves before the war and understood that the rules of international law were very clear: "If it had a crescent on it, you couldn't engage it." Brasfield approached the bus after its military passengers, many in bandages, had been helped off and searched for weapons. The Iraqi doctor proved to be extremely helpful as a translator, and directed the prisoners who had been collected by Manchester and his colleagues to a central site along the highway, alongside the now empty bus. "He had studied medicine in Chicago," Brasfield recalled, "and had family there."

Vehicles kept arriving, and more Iraqi soldiers surrendered. Edward Walker, who was thirty-one and, because of his medical training, known as Doc, was ordered to keep a head count. "It kept building," Walker told me. "It started with probably thirty, thirty-five. As each vehicle pulled up, it kept adding up and adding up. We got to somewhere between three hundred and sixty or three hundred and eighty." (A few moments later in the interview, he recalled a precise number—three hundred and eighty-two prisoners.) Each prisoner was quickly searched and stripped of weapons. "We were clearing weapons as soon as they were coming out of the vehicles," Walker said. "They were coming in so fast that we had no time but to grab what weapons they had and throw them into a pile."

The Americans were badly outnumbered by the Iraqis, but John Brasfield had no doubts about the enemy's state of mind: "I guarantee you that everybody in that war would have surrendered if they could. We knew that." He and his colleagues gave the frightened prisoners water and food and reassured them. "One of the first guys who came in was bawling—so happy that he was safe," Brasfield recalled. "I told him, 'You've surrendered. You're safe. Nothing is going to happen to you.'" Another man, who had lost an eye, asked if he was now a prisoner. He was told yes. "Thank Allah," the man said.

Sergeant James Testerman, one of Allen's section leaders, told me that to insure the prisoners' safety "we gave each one of them a white piece of paper, if they didn't have anything white." Testerman was referring to American-designed surrender leaflets, printed in Arabic, that had been dropped throughout the war zone. The leaflet promised that those who gave up would live to see their families again.



"Sotheby's extends its deepest sympathies and wonders whether the deceased might have owned any early German Expressionist pieces."

Brasfield handled the radios for Lieutenant Allen, and Allen made it a point to keep the battalion headquarters in the loop. Allen told the battalion operations center that he had captured a large number of prisoners; he also reported the precise position of the Iraqi hospital bus. The Scout platoon had a G.P.S. platform on the lead Humvee, and could fix the bus's location within a hundred yards. "We called in spot reports as the group got bigger," Brasfield recalled.

According to Walker, someone in Ware's headquarters ordered the Scouts to blow up the confiscated weapons. Walker was the platoon's demolition expert as well as a medical specialist, and he took charge. He was an engineer by training, and had taught an advanced course for the 5th Engineer Battalion at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, his home unit. He had been assigned to the Scouts only a few days before the war began. The Iraqi weapons were flung into a truck, which was moved a safe distance away. Two captured Iraqi trucks and the hospital bus were also moved, to create what amounted to a three-sided box, or holding pen, and the prisoners were sitting in rows inside. The open end of the box faced west, Walker recalled, in the direction of the main battalion force. "We told them, 'Don't move. Don't go nowhere.'" Walker then busied himself with his demolition assignment, with the help of Specialist 4 David A. Collatt. It would take three charges of a plastic explosive, known as C4, to destroy the truck holding the weapons.

"Suddenly, we're told on our battalion frequency that it's time to move on," James Manchester recalled. Intelligence reported that an Iraqi missile truck had been spotted a few miles up the road, and Lieutenant Allen was ordered to engage it. The platoon took off. In Manchester's recollection, the prisoners were simply assembled near the hospital bus; he doesn't remember the holding pen. "We're boogying out," Manchester recalled. "And we have these people gathered, and we've given them all our M.R.E.s"—ready-to-eat meals. Then word came that the battalion's main battle force had finished refuelling. "The task force was fixing to move," another Scout, Sergeant Steven L. Mulig, said, "and we had to get out of there, because they shoot at everything."

Walker and Collatt set the delayed fuse for the plastic explosives on the truck and, with seconds to spare, jumped into a Humvee and began speeding away. The explosion was spectacular, Walker told me. "A lot of little stuff" began hitting the ground—truck parts, shrapnel, and hundreds of unexploded Iraqi bullet rounds. At that moment, Walker said, a platoon or two of Bradleys came into view from the west and began rolling toward the clutch of prisoners.

Mulig, who is still on active duty, at Fort Carson, Colorado, recalled, "They were all in line—moving abreast of each

FRIENDSHIP
MAKING 50 TO 100K A YEAR
MAKING 101 TO 300K A YEAR
MAKING 301 TO 700K A YEAR
P.C. VEY

other." The Bradleys' machine guns opened up. "I saw rounds impact in front of the vehicle," Mulig said. "I could tell that they were hitting close to the prisoners, because there were people running. There were some who could have survived, but a lot of them wouldn't have, from where I saw the rounds hit."

The Bradleys were armed with chain-driven machine guns, capable of firing up to a thousand rounds a minute. "I couldn't see the prisoners themselves," Walker said. "You can't hear screaming. All you hear is the boom-boom-boom. You could hear rounds hitting the bus and vehicles. I could see the bullets were going where they were. We're yelling"—on the radio—" 'They're firing at the prisoners! They're firing at the prisoners!' And about that time I look up and that Bradley turns and they start firing at us. We're in a marked Humvee. They hit the ground right behind our vehicle." He meant the bullets. "I turn around and start screaming. So is Collatt: 'They're firing at us! They're firing at us!' We started taking off and they continued to fire at us."

Walker, speaking to me at his home, in rural Missouri, said that he is convinced that all the prisoners "got hit." They were seated in rows, and the high-intensity machine guns on the Bradleys were capable of deep penetration. "I'm telling you that when a Bradley hits something it's going to take it out," he said. "And a human body ain't going to slow a twenty-five-calibre round down. And they were in rows. There was a row and another row in front of them and another row in front of them. If they shot one guy in the front row, it's going to go through everybody in that row. It's not going to slow down. The human body will not slow down that round."

Collatt shared Walker's shock as the gun turrets of the Bradleys turned and started firing at the prisoners. "The main thing you could see was the mike-mike"—rounds—"kicking up dirt right around the general area," he said. Collatt, who left the Army in 1993, believes that some escaped the firing by fleeing behind the vehicles: "You could see the prisoners start running." He said that he remains baffled, because "we knew it was a hospital bus and we'd talked about it"—on the radio. "We told everybody where it was. They didn't get the word or they were trigger-happy."

Walker said, "They knew there were prisoners there. They knew they were unarmed. They knew the hospital bus was there, and they knew we were blowing the truck up." The Bradleys were in no danger from the exploding truck, which had been moved a safe distance away. Moreover, Walker said, the attacking soldiers "were all buttoned down in their vehicles, so they really had nothing to worry about."

James Manchester and his colleagues on Lieutenant Allen's Humvee, a few hundred yards farther east, initially thought they were being fired upon. "Shit hits the fan," Manchester recalled. "Bullets are flying." He looked back and realized that the unarmed Iraqis were being targeted. "I did not see people's heads exploding," he told me. "But I definitely saw shooting. I saw a crowd of people who were being fired upon." He recalled thinking, This is fucked up, but the Humvee just kept on moving, scooting away from the shooting at high speed.

John Brasfield had brought a small, inexpensive tape recorder to the Gulf and, while handling the radios on Lieutenant Allen's Humvee, routinely taped transmissions. He would ship some of the tapes home, he thought, and give his wife a glimpse of war. His tape recorder was running as Allen's Humvee sped away from the prisoners, and from the bullets from the Bradleys' machine guns. The recording, made available by Brasfield for this account, documents the young soldiers' horror, anger, and, ultimately, resignation as the shooting went on. It's not always clear who is speaking on the tape, amid the background noise of engines, radio squeals, and the crosscutting of situation reports, but James Manchester, after carefully listening to the tape, was able to distinguish his own voice in some of the exchanges, along with Kirk Allen's and Brasfield's. He also isolated the voice and call signs of Lieutenant Colonel Charles Ware, the battalion commander.

"The lead company behind us is tearing up all those vehicles," someone tells battalion headquarters as the recording begins. "I hope they understand what a Humvee looks like," he adds, referring to the indiscriminate firing in the direction of the Scouts.

A moment later, a Scout reports on the platoon radio net, "Twenty-five mike-mike blowing approximately five hundred metres behind me with my ass end showing." He's telling Lieutenant Allen that machine-gun fire is trailing his Humvee. "You're not supposed to be in that area," Allen responds.

"There's no one shooting at them," another Scout says on the platoon net, referring to the Bradleys. "Why'd they have to shoot?"

Allen reports on Ware's battalion net, "There's shooting, but there's no one there"—no combatants—"to shoot at." Ware answers, "I understand," and then asks a series of operational questions about maps.

Later, Manchester asks Allen, "Sir, what element is firing behind us?"

Allen: "I have no fucking idea."

An unidentified Scout asks, "Why are we shooting at these people when they are not shooting at us?"

Brasfield: "They want to surrender. . . . Fucking armored vehicles [the Bradleys]. They don't have to blow them apart."

Sporadic firing continues. Someone asks Allen, "Why don't you tell them, sir, that they are willing to surrender. Tell 'em that." Someone else says, amid the noise, "It's murder."

Ware is on the radio when someone says, "We shot the guys we had gathered up." Another voice interjects, "They didn't have no weapons." Ware calls for all firing to stop and then asks another question about routine battalion procedures.

"He heard it; he knew it," Sergeant Mulig told me later, speaking of Ware. "But it didn't register."

James Testerman felt shame as he and his fellow-Scouts left the prisoners and fled. "I had fed these guys and got them to trust me," he said. "The first two who came in were scared to death—afraid we were going to shoot them. We set them down and fed them M.R.E.s." One of the Iraqis played the tough-guy role, Testerman went on. "He wouldn't eat it—afraid we were going to poison him. So I took a bite of it, and gave it to him. The tough guy broke down, crying. I can only imagine what he thought" when the Bradleys "started shooting—that we were sending him to the slaughter."

"You think about it," he said. "All those people."

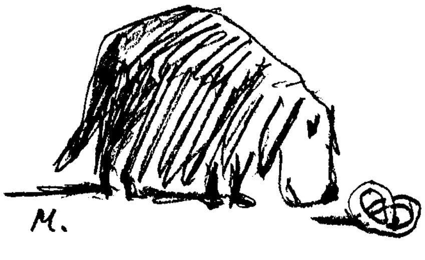
THE WHITE FLAG

The war ended abruptly. On February 28th, when the ceasefire was announced, McCaffrey's men had not proved themselves in a major engagement, despite months of training and anticipation. The complicated feelings that some of them had about the "one-sided victory," over Iraqis with no will to fight, are perceptively expressed by David Pierson in "Tuskers":

> My only reservation was illogical; I somehow wished that they had proved a more worthy opponent. They hadn't lost the battle, they had forfeited it. We were achieving a great victory but without great sacrifice. Sacrifice, the lifeblood of freedom, the price of all glory, the nature of soldiering. It was an expectation and a curse.

McCaffrey's tankers had driven more than two hundred miles across the sand dunes and wadis of southern Iraq with little sleep and almost no action. Many of the men were frustrated, on edge, and eager to do what they had been trained to do—fire their weapons. The senior officers of the 2-4 Cavalry Squadron, a unit assigned directly to McCaffrey's headquarters, found a way to relieve tension and to prevent civilian abuse. "The worst thing that could happen was if some kid thought he'd ridden four or five days and never shot his weapon," Lieutenant Colonel Joseph C. Barto III (Ret.), then the executive officer, told me. "We called all the commanders and said, 'Make sure these guys get to shoot their weapons.'" Targets of opportunity were found—abandoned buildings and the like—and the tanks lined up and fired away with machine guns, rockets, and shells.

In some cases, the end of the war led to an erosion of discipline. Many soldiers in the 24th Division's tank companies and Scout platoons began to collect battlefield souvenirs—especially Soviet AK-47 assault rifles carried by the Iraqi military. The scavenger hunting caused casualties, especially after the ceasefire, as soldiers triggered land mines and other munitions in their search for souvenirs. In one instance, an elaborate Iraqi Defense Ministry compound was broken into by the 2-4 Cavalry, and, under the eyes of its commander, Lieutenant Colonel Thomas J. Leney, soldiers loaded glassware, trays, sterling silver, gun collections, oversized rugs, and a huge photograph of Saddam Hussein onto tanks and armored cars to take back to America. Leney, who is now retired, told me that his action in authorizing the break-in may have been "bad judgment." The items were to be used, he said, for a Cavalry Ball, to be held after the war, at Fort Stewart. (Soldiers are allowed to confiscate certain kinds of equipment, and in the Gulf War, as in most others, looting was widespread; there was no investigation of the 2-4 Cavalry's actions.) The looting took place in front of officers and men from the 124th Military Intelligence Battalion, whose specialists—interpreters, radar operators, and counter-intelligence officers—were assigned to every brigade in the 24th Division. "Our guys watched them fill up five tanks," 1st Sergeant Jason Claar, of the 124th, told me. "We knew of whole companies loading stuff in their tanks."



One of the 124th's primary missions was to supply forward radar teams to the Scout platoons of each battalion. The three-man units, known as ground-surveillance-radar, or G.S.R., teams, carried high-resolution equipment in their Humvees that could isolate enemy formations and spot vehicle movements thousands of yards away and in the dark. The G.S.R. team assigned to the 3-7 Battalion of the 1st Brigade was headed by a sergeant named Steven Larimore, who had joined the Army, in 1987, at the advanced age of thirty-one. Larimore was widely admired by his fellow-soldiers for his calm under pressure, his competence, and his integrity, and for his ability to throw passes in touch-football games.

On March 1st, the day after the ceasefire went into effect, Larimore's men and the platoon to which they were attached, the Scouts from the 3-7 Battalion, were ordered to continue patrols in the Euphrates Valley battlefield. In the late afternoon, Larimore recalled, there was a report that some Army troops had discovered a cache of Iraqi weapons at a deserted schoolhouse in a small village near Highway 8. The radar team joined the

3-7 Scouts in clearing the village and searching the schoolhouse. The weapons were covered with waxed paper and protective grease; they had never been fired. After taking souvenirs, Larimore told me, he and his men left the destruction of the weapons to others and moved out, to the east, still accompanied by six or so Humvees and Bradleys of the 3-7 Scouts. Larimore and his men noticed a group of villagers walking in the area. "One guy had a white bedsheet on a stick," Larimore said. Then, he recounted, "out of the blue sky, some guy from where we're sitting"—in the Scout platoon—"begins shooting" into the villagers. Other machine guns joined in. "There was a lot of screaming and hollering going on. We were screaming, 'Cease fire!' People hit the ground. The firing went on." Larimore estimated that he saw at least fifteen, and perhaps twenty or more, Iraqis fall. He had never been in a firefight before, he said, and he was stunned by the noise and the carnage. He estimated that the firing lasted no more than thirty seconds. "I did not see anything that looked like return fire," he said. The vehicles in the Scout unit, he said, had opened up on a group of unarmed civilians.

A second eyewitness, Sergeant Wayne P. Irwin, who was in charge of another G.S.R. team, said the Iraqis were "just passing through" the area when the Scouts suddenly began firing their machine guns. "I yelled for them to cease fire," he said. "I couldn't understand why they were firing." Of the Iraqis, he said, "To me, they posed no threat to us—they were all in civilian clothes." Irwin was the senior man from the 124th on the scene, and the Scouts subsequently explained to him that the Iraqis were carrying "grenade launchers and stuff like that." Irwin, a seventeen-year Army veteran who is now on an intelligence assignment in South Korea, told me that he did not find that account credible. He had seen the Iraqis. "To me, they had nothing."

Michael Sangiorge, a nineteen-year-old soldier from Brooklyn, was one of Larimore's crew members. (He is now a nursing student in Pembroke, Georgia.) He thought the firing lasted a long time. "It seemed like an eternity," he told me. "Three or four minutes. The Bradleys were shooting all their guns. They were firing into a cluster of people." A few of the victims "were wearing dark robes"—clothing that did not rule out the possibility that they were in the military. There was no doubt, however, that "they were basically surrendering," Sangiorge recalled. "We heard screaming, and we're screaming—a whole lot of yelling is going on." He didn't take a body count, but he estimated that about twenty people were fired upon.

When the firing ended, Sangiorge said, Sergeant Larimore—who was known for being unflappable—"lost his cool," and jumped off his vehicle to get a better look at the scene. "He was pissed."

Moments later, the G.S.R. unit was ordered back to the schoolyard, along with the 3-7 Scout platoon. "I went to the platoon leader"—Lieutenant John J. Grisillo, a 1987 graduate of West Point—"and asked him what he was doing," Larimore told me. "He said they were fired on and we returned fire." Grisillo was equally angry at him, Larimore said, because "I was questioning his authority. I told him we had a responsibility to go make sure that there weren't any wounded" among the slain Iraqis on the field. The G.S.R. teams carried medical kits in their vehicles. "He said, 'Go ahead,' " Larimore recounted. "I said, 'I'm not going anywhere in front of you.' "

Sangiorge and the other crew members were not even in their twenties, Larimore recalled. " 'Sarge,' they said to me. 'That wasn't right what happened. What do we have to do?' I told them I didn't know, but I'd find out. I was still very mad."

Lieutenant Grisillo confirmed Larimore's description of the shootings—up to a point. Larimore, he said, had failed to realize that the men were responding to a threat. Grisillo explained that his platoon, made up of two armored vehicles and six Humvees, all armed with machine guns, had cleared a village, with the help of Larimore's G.S.R. team, and afterward someone looked back and noticed a small group of Iraqis in civilian clothes. "They raised a white flag," Grisillo said, but he and his men could see through binoculars that "they were carrying weapons. We fired warning shots, but they didn't stop" and continued to move toward a building—the schoolhouse—that was known to contain weapons. In so doing, Grisillo insisted, the Iraqis posed a threat. His Scout platoon opened fire with machine guns, and some Iraqis, perhaps five or six, were shot. No formal written report of the shootings was ever made.

Grisillo told me that after the war he met with his brigade commander, John Le Moyne. "He let me know that he thought the G.S.R. guys didn't understand the situation at the time," Grisillo said. "Calls had to be made. It's not nice, but prudent. If I had that situation again, I'd do it again. I've never lost a minute's sleep about it." Grisillo left the Army, as a captain, in 1992. He now runs a job-recruiting firm for retired military personnel.

According to Major Brennan, McCaffrey's staff officer, during the war the General repeatedly asked his staff to survey the battlefield and determine if Iraqi trophies—such as enemy tanks and artillery pieces—could be salvaged for display at the Fort Stewart museum, back in Georgia. No one had done anything about it. At the morning staff meeting on March 1st, the first full day of the ceasefire, Brennan said, McCaffrey suddenly turned to him and appointed him the division's war-souvenir officer. Brennan commandeered a Humvee and a driver, loaded up with water and food, and took off for the war zone. "I just went out and looked around to the east and to the north"—along the line of retreat from Kuwait to Baghdad, Brennan told me. "I wasn't worried. What I saw was an army that had given up." He and his driver ran into perhaps ten Iraqi soldiers during the morning. "All they wanted out of me was water and food," he recalled. "None of them attempted to fire at me. I felt there was no danger. There was a ceasefire. I was more worried about Le Moyne's brigade"—the 1st Brigade's heavily armed command post was nearby—"than about the Iraqi Army."

It was an eerie scene, he recalled. Dozens of tanks, trucks, and other vehicles lay scattered over the battlefield. In some, the engines were still running. Bombs, shells, and other ammunition lay about as well, much of it near smoldering wreckage and in danger of "cooking off"—exploding in the heat. Brennan marked many sites on a map. He planned to return the next morning, March 2nd, with more men and three forklift trucks to begin the process of gathering McCaffrey's war trophies.

II—THE CAUSEWAY

IMMINENT ATTACK

While other American soldiers and their commanders stopped and cheered the ceasefire, McCaffrey quietly continued to move his combat forces. On the morning of the ceasefire, February 28th, they were approximately twenty-five miles west of the Lake Hammar causeway; by the eve of the Battle of Rumaila, two days later, he had expanded his area of operations. The 24th Division was now within striking distance of a seventeen-mile access road connecting the highway to the causeway, one of the few known pathways out of the marshes and desert in southern Iraq. "I knew I did not want to go into Basra and fight in Basra," McCaffrey explained to Army investigators six months after the war, "but I was prepared to continue the attack to the east." His plan was to be ready, as any prudent commander would be, to lead an invasion into Baghdad, should one be ordered. "Was I eager to go north toward Baghdad?" McCaffrey asked the investigators rhetorically. "Personally, I think it would have been militarily an easy option."

With the ceasefire, the rules of engagement were revised by XVIII Corps headquarters. Rather than aggressively seek out and destroy the enemy forces, the commanders were to protect their troops and hold their positions. McCaffrey was no longer authorized to initiate offensive military actions on his own; he had to get prior approval from the Corps commander, General Luck. He could still wage war, but only if he was faced with "imminent attack." The new rules also stated, "If an enemy vehicle approaches with its turret turned opposite the direction of travel, the enemy vehicle will be considered indicating a non-hostile intent." The rules went on to say, "If these conditions are not present, the vehicle will be considered having a hostile intent. In either case, all attempts will be made to allow the occupants of the vehicle to surrender before U.S. Forces will take hostile measures." The unilateral ceasefire gave all Iraqi combat units, including the most élite tank brigades, the right to unencumbered retreat, provided they moved with cannons reversed.

The Iraqi withdrawal through the Euphrates Valley had been carefully choreographed by the Third Army headquarters. The goal was to speed up the exit of the Iraqis from Kuwait, and on March 1st thousands of soldiers—in tanks, trucks, and stolen cars—continued their retreat toward Baghdad, streaming northwest day and night toward the Lake Hammar causeway.

McCaffrey had moved his forces toward the access road without informing all the senior officers who needed to know—inside his own division operations center, at XVIII Corps, and at Third Army headquarters. Lieutenant Colonel Patrick Lamar, McCaffrey's operations officer, told Army investigators in the summer of 1991 that he did not know at the time that John Le Moyne's 1st Brigade, which included the most forward units, had moved to the north and east. Frank H. Akers, a young colonel who was the operations officer at XVIII Corps headquarters, also told me that he did not know that McCaffrey had moved two brigades forward after the ceasefire. Neither did Lieutenant General John Yeosock, commander of the Third Army.

The retreating Iraqis, who had been assured of safe passage, were now in harm's way—and so were McCaffrey's soldiers.

McCaffrey's forces were at risk, Akers told me, because division commanders invariably need "higher headquarters to have an accurate read of their location in case they have to call in support." Careful reporting, Akers added, avoids friendly-fire accidents and enables help to reach a unit in trouble more quickly.

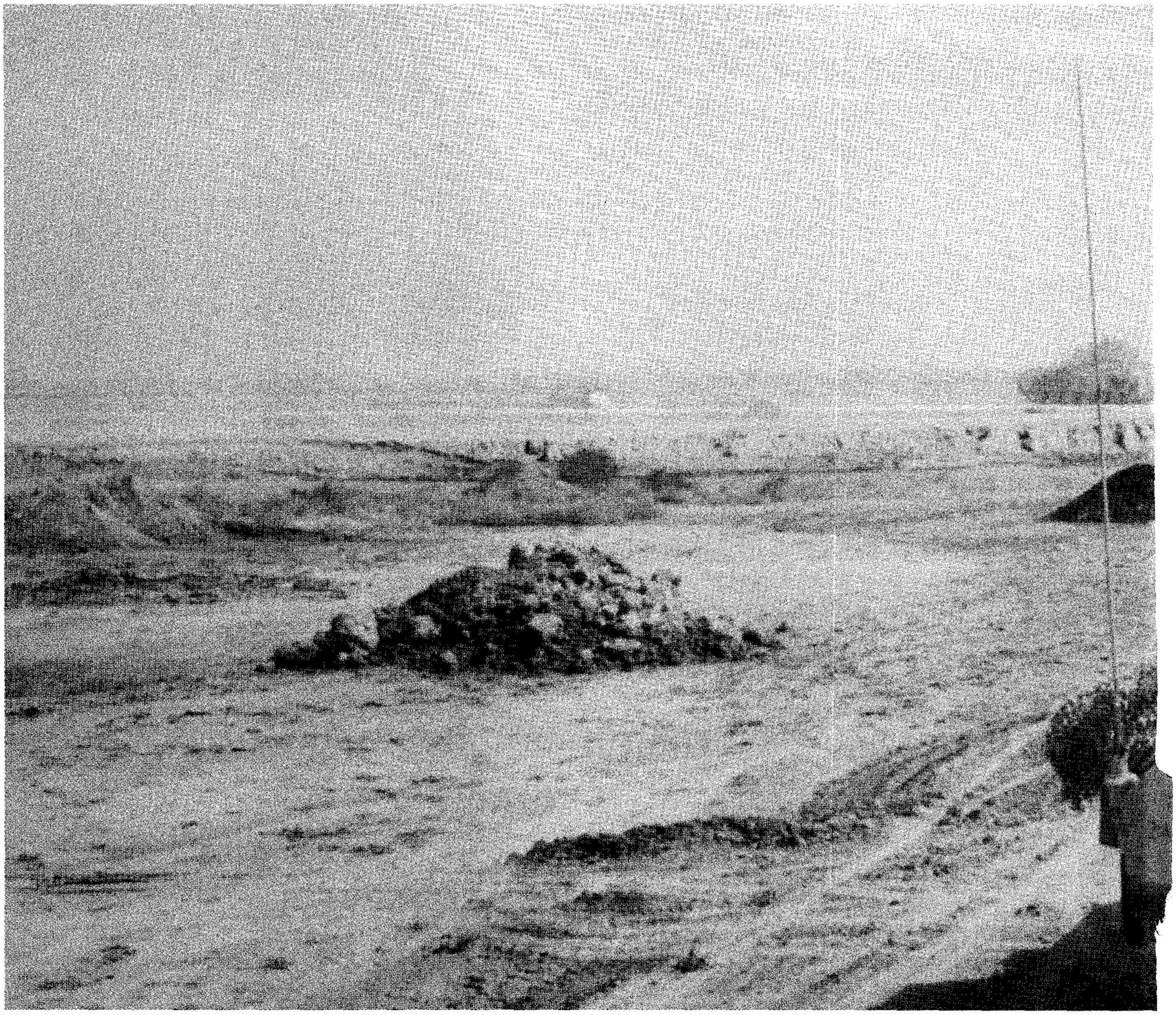
General McCaffrey, in a letter to *The New Yorker*, firmly denied that his division had ever purposely failed to inform the appropriate commands of the troop deployments prior to the March 2nd engagement. In a separate letter he noted, "It is simply not credible that a division in combat, employing artillery and air power, and widely equipped with GPS, could or would falsify unit locations."

However, General Yeosock told me, "Too many people have the imaginary notion that we can track everything from space." What was important, he said, was that the operations officers at the Third Army "get a lot of confirmatory information from the people on the ground. At the end of the day, it's what comes in through the human channels."

Shortly after dawn on March 2nd, a unit reported to McCaffrey's command post that it was being fired upon by the retreating Iraqis and that it had returned fire in self-defense. These were the opening shots of the Battle of Rumaila.

Over the past nine years, McCaffrey has consistently defended his March 2nd offensive by emphasizing, as he did in his letters, that his actions were designed to protect American soldiers—and were thus fully compliant with the revised rules of engagement. "My troops on the ground were under attack," McCaffrey wrote. "My sole focus was the safety of my soldiers."

The early-morning Iraqi attack that



McCaffrey, with binoculars, directing the Battle of Rumaila from Lieutenant Colonel Ware's Bradley two days after the ceasefire. On t

McCaffrey and others speak of was said to be targeted on units in Charles Ware's 2-7 Battalion that were at the forward edge of the American advance. The 2-7 Scouts were attacked by R.P.G.s, Sagger missiles, and "direct fire from T-72 tanks," McCaffrey wrote. The rocketing continued later that morning, as one Sagger missile was fired at the American positions and others were prepared for launch. A muzzle flash was observed, McCaffrey wrote, and an artillery cannon under tow was moved off the road, disconnected, and pointed at the division. (The Army inquiry into Rumaila concluded that two weapons were fired, but did not report any injuries or damage.)

"In sum," McCaffrey wrote, "we acted appropriately at the time the Rumaila battle occurred. My troops routed a large enemy force that not only threatened my soldiers but also opened fire on our position."

"They came rolling in there," John Le Moyne told an Army oral historian a few days after the March 2nd engagement, "and I'll be damned if they didn't start shooting at us." In a separate interview, his operations officer, Major Benjamin Freakley, told an Army oral historian that the first reports of enemy contact—the firing of an R.P.G.—came from Charlie Company in Ware's battalion. Moments later, Charlie Company again received fire—this time, Sagger missiles from Iraqi B.M.P.s (Russian-built armored vehicles known to the soldiers as Bimps). The Americans immediately counterattacked, Freakley said, and destroyed six Iraqi B.M.P.s and four T-72 tanks. Meanwhile, a group of helicopters that had been scrambled to reconnoitre the situation told of seeing "hundreds" of Iraqi vehicles moving to the north. McCaffrey "realized this force could move to the west now that they knew we were here"—and threaten his forces. "So we decided to go ahead and fight them, since they had engaged us first."

Freakley was saying, in essence, that McCaffrey chose to turn all his guns on the Iraqis because of the possibility that the defeated Army might decide to stop

ght is Captain Richard Averna. The 24th hit the Iraqi column until every moving vehicle—tank, truck, automobile—was destroyed.

its withdrawal and, in a move that amounted to suicide, attack the far superior American forces. If Freakley's recollection is right, McCaffrey waited half an hour or so to gather his forces and create an attack plan. The precise length of McCaffrey's delay could not be conclusively fixed from the available documents. The division log entries suggest that the delay between the two attacks was less than forty minutes. But in his sworn testimony Patrick Lamar, the division operations officer, told Army investigators that there "was a period of about two hours between the time the firing first was reported before any action was ever taken." All the authorities agree, however, on one essential point—there were no further confirmed reports of Iraqi shootings between the first and second attacks.

John Le Moyne told me that "there was absolutely no doubt in my mind" that the resumption of firing was justified. He said he now believes that the Iraqis had not planned their early-morning attack. "After ten years, I think they just didn't have the discipline and training." He theorized, "The first guy who fired was part of a guard post. He woke up, saw American combat vehicles, and said, 'Oh, shit! Oh, dear,' reacted out of panic, and fired."

The authorized history of the 24th Division in the Gulf War, written by Major Jason Kamiya, a division operations officer, closely echoes the Le Moyne and Freakley accounts.

THESE GUYS ARE GOING HOME

Interviews for this article, and the 24th Division's daily log for March 2nd, fail to support many aspects of the official account. The Iraqis were driving anything that moved, and by early morning on March 2nd hundreds of retreating trucks, tanks, and other vehicles had come into radar view of the 1st Brigade. At 4:45 A.M., reports came from Sergeant Larimore's G.S.R. unit and from Lieutenant Grisillo's 3-7 Scouts, and as they became increasingly vivid they got everyone's attention.

James Manchester, in the 2-7 Scout platoon commanded by Lieutenant Allen, did not see any Iraqi firing, any Iraqi prisoners, or any Iraqi panic that morn-

"Let's do snack."

ing. His platoon had been travelling in front of the main attack force, as usual, and he was cheerfully watching the Iraqis retreat in an orderly fashion along the road leading to the Lake Hammar causeway. He and his fellow-Scouts had been told "to make sure that these guys are retreating." He recalled, "I remember thinking, It's over, it's over. These guys are going home. It was just a line of vehicles on the road."

John Brasfield also remembers that morning. He had been troubled by his own brigade's continuing movement to the east, toward Basra. "On the day of the ceasefire, we got an order to move out," Brasfield recalled. "I'm a 'Why?' guy, and I asked Allen why. I didn't want to die after the ceasefire. He said, 'This is what we're instructed to do.'"

Early on the morning of March 2nd, Brasfield continued, his platoon had moved east, with no Iraqi opposition. Some soldiers who were farther east reported that an Iraqi tank "came up on them, but it never fired. We sat there all morning watching movement on the road about six kilometres away." A steady stream of retreating tanks moved along the road. "There's no hostile action toward us, but they don't see us," Brasfield said. Edward Walker also recalled the tableau as non-threatening. "Many of the Iraqi tanks were on flatbed trucks and had their turrets tucked backward"—that is, their cannons were facing away from the American combat forces.

When word of the Iraqi column first reached Le Moyne's 1st Brigade command post, his intelligence officer, Captain Linda Suttlehan, informed him that "the only unit" it could belong to was the Hammurabi Republican Guard tank division, one of the most battle-hardened units in the Iraqi Army, which was scrambling to get back, intact, to Baghdad. There was a growing sense of excitement both in the brigade and in the division headquarters, Suttlehan recalled. Some of the senior officers "wanted action," and said as much.

A far less threatening observation was officially reported sometime around 6 or 7 A.M. by the 1st Brigade to the 24th Division tactical-operations center. Item 47 in the division log for March 2nd noted, "Col Le Moyne is observing vehicles, which consist of 200 trucks (flatbeds with some mil[itary] vans)." A tank or any other vehicle riding on a flatbed posed no threat, as every armored officer knew. However, that reassuring report was contradicted by Le Moyne in the very next log item, which said that Le Moyne "reports that vehicles' report is 'erroneous and bullshit.'" Le Moyne then ordered an attack-helicopter reinforcement for his brigade—a major escalation.

The radio suddenly came to life, James Manchester recalled. He listened as Captain Richard B. Averna, the commander of Ware's Charlie Company, told Ware that the retreating Iraqis were preparing to fire antitank missiles at the American forces. Manchester said his platoon was astonished at the message. "We are sitting right on top of these people," he told me, referring to the Iraqis, "and there are no vehicles pulled off." Captain Averna, he said, was behind him and could not see the line of vehicles.

Brasfield recalled a different but equally overwrought report. "One of the companies sees one or two dismounts"—Iraqi soldiers who have climbed off a tank or armored vehicle—"with an R.P.G. pointed in its direction. They ask permission to engage, and finally get it. There's some boom, boom, boom—a very short engagement. This was early, before the big battle." Brasfield said he was later told, "Somebody panicked and thought they saw something they didn't see." Another factor in the Scout platoon's skepticism over the report, Brasfield said, was a lack of confidence in Ware's leadership.

Sergeant Stuart Hirstein, of the 124th Military Intelligence Battalion, was clearing an Iraqi bunker with a company in the 2-7 Battalion when his unit monitored the early reports about Iraqi fire. One of the combat companies in Ware's battalion had issued an urgent call for help, asking every available unit to come to its rescue: it was taking fire from oncoming Iraqi tanks. Hirstein and his team rushed to the site in their armored vehicles. When they arrived, he said, there was no attack and no imminent threat from the retreating Iraqi tanks. "Some of the tanks were in travel formation, and their guns were not in any engaged position." The Iraqi crew members "were sitting on the outside of their vehicles, catching rays," he said. "Nobody was on the machine guns." And yet the Americans "wanted to fire them up." At that point, he added, their commanders said no.

There was a barrage of messages. "The radio was blasting," Linda Suttlehan told me. One message stood out: a Scout claimed that an Iraqi R.P.G. had been fired at him. Other soldiers reported that an Iraqi tank had fired at their positions. "We plotted grids, but the timing didn't make sense," Suttlehan said. "The timing was too close. Was it one or two different tanks? Or was it the same guy shooting?" In any case, Suttlehan recalled, "I needed to know which way the tubes are pointing"—the cannons on the Iraqi tanks. "Are they in front or back?" After some time had passed, she said, she and the other analysts were "still trying to figure it out."

There was similar confusion in the 124th Military Intelligence Battalion. Major James P. Kump, the 124th's senior intelligence officer forward in the field during the attack, had been monitoring what he assumed was a routine retreat early that morning when the fighting started. Kump, who spent twenty-two years on active duty and is now retired, told me, "I thought, I can't believe what I'm hearing! There's nothing going on. These guys are retreating." The skies above the battlefield were crammed with state-of-the-art intelligence devices, Kump said, and much of the intelligence was being passed to his Humvee. "I had links to several intelligence systems—more than I can talk about. And I'd have known if troops were moving toward us." Kump went on, "I knew of no justification for the counterattack. I always felt it was a violation of the cease-fire. From an integrity standpoint, I was very troubled." Before all previous operations, he said, planners at division headquarters had routinely sought his intelligence assessments. This time, he said, "no one asked me for an assessment."

COMMAND DECISION

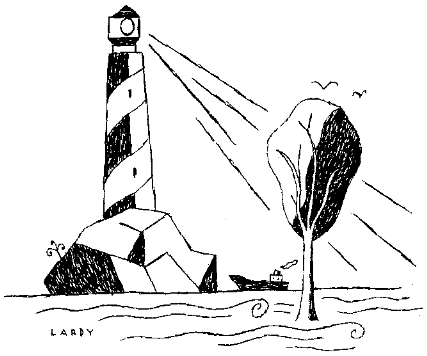
McCaffrey's official headquarters was the division's mobile tactical command post, but he directed the war from what is known as an assault command post, a unit of four tanks and three or so tracked vehicles which stays in the front lines with the advancing troops. At intervals, the vehicles would stop together, and McCaffrey's staff would pull out canvas extensions to provide shade, and set up cots for quick naps. Fresh coffee was brewed, and the area neatly served as a mobile headquarters where McCaffrey could get up-to-date briefings and hold small staff meetings.

The men in the assault command post worked intimately with McCaffrey and were the most knowledgeable about what was going on. They included Captain Michael Bell, an armor officer who was McCaffrey's personal aide—the man who arranged his schedule, screened his appointments, and monitored his telephone. Bell, a West Point graduate, was married to a fellow West Point graduate, whose father was a two-star general on active duty at the Pentagon. Bell considered it his responsibility to let his boss know what he thought, in essence confronting McCaffrey with observations he sometimes did not want to hear. Whatever the cause, Bell fell out of favor. "One day, he was the greatest thing since sliced bread," Patrick Lamar, the division's operations officer, said. And then, he said, "Bell got blitzed."

Lamar ran the assault command post, and thus was responsible, in war, for relaying McCaffrey's orders to the field units. The son of an abandoned Second World War French war bride, he had worked his way through Kent State University, and to an Army commission, on an R.O.T.C. scholarship.

According to Lamar, the interval after the first skirmishing by Ware's battalion provoked a debate inside McCaffrey's assault command post. "There was no incoming," Lamar told me. "I know that for a fact." He described the battle as "a giant hoax. The Iraqis were doing absolutely nothing. I told McCaffrey I was having trouble confirming the incoming." It didn't matter, Lamar added. McCaffrey wanted to attack.

Colonel Townsend, the division artillery commander, remains skeptical today of some of the early-morning radio discussions between McCaffrey and Le Moyne. "There was not point-blank fire," Townsend told me. "The excitement on the command net was not there." Townsend thought that at least one antitank round had been fired, but there was also "some indication" in the radio traffic that "something wasn't right."



"There was a lot of confusion," Captain Jim Morris, a West Point graduate who worked in the command post, told me, and also "some huddling" among Lamar, McCaffrey, and General Terry Scott, the deputy division commander. "I remember Lamar outside, smoking a cigarette and shaking his head." Major Thomas Matyok, another junior officer in the command post, had the impression, as he told me, that there was not "a lot of enthusiasm" on Lamar's part for a renewed attack on the Iraqi forces. He added that he and Captain Morris had a running joke about the lack of Iraqi aggression: Iraq was a surprisingly patriotic country "because everybody was always waving their national flag—all white."

As one officer recalled the discussion, "General Scott was all for the attack"—even to the point of suggesting ways to provoke an Iraqi retaliation. "He was asking a lot of questions about 'Can we get the Scout [helicopter] out and kick some dirt up and see what happens?'" Log Item 53, filed shortly after 7:30 A.M., states that Scott "requests PSYOPS Helicopter."

"Scott was sitting there saying, 'Let's go get these guys,'" Lamar told me. Lamar said his own view was "We didn't need to kill more people—we'd proved our point." But, he said, "McCaffrey had to have his armor battle." Scott, when he was asked about his actions that morning, told me he was "emphatic that the enemy had to start it. Eventually, we became convinced that it was a real, no-shit attack by the Iraqis."

In the course of the discussions, Lamar reminded McCaffrey of XVIII Corps's newly revised rules of engagement, and urged him to obtain higher authority. At that point, McCaffrey made a telephone call to General Luck, or so Lamar assumed, at XVIII Corps headquarters. (Luck later told me that he did not provide any guidance to McCaffrey, or have any conversation with him, immediately before the March 2nd counterattack.) And then, Lamar said, the discussion was over.

After the phone call, McCaffrey in effect pushed Lamar aside and assumed operational command of the division himself. "He just took me out of the picture," Lamar said.

McCaffrey abruptly left the meeting

and moved his command post, without Lamar, to Colonel Ware's battalion. "He left the operations center in the cold," Lamar said. "Nobody knew what the hell was going on." (The division log suggested that the time of the shift in command post was 8:27 A.M.)

"I'll kill somebody if I have to," Lamar told me. "But if you're going to violate a truce you'd better have permission to do so. McCaffrey put people at risk at the peace table." Lamar was referring to General Schwarzkopf's formal ceasefire talks with the Iraqi leadership, scheduled to begin the next morning.

Captain Bell, who had been present during the discussions before the counterattack, came to believe that McCaffrey's decision to move his brigades to the east of the original ceasefire line was designed to provoke the Iraqis. Referring to the deployment in force, he said, "The entire regiment moves forward. He's pulled the whole division in line. You have an army that comes forward in the dark after a ceasefire in a confined battlefield, and of course somebody's going to shoot at you." There is a serious distinction, nonetheless, Bell added, between a round or two fired in panic or self-defense and McCaffrey's insistence that the Iraqis were "attacking us." That "is pure fabrication," he said.

BATTLE ORDER

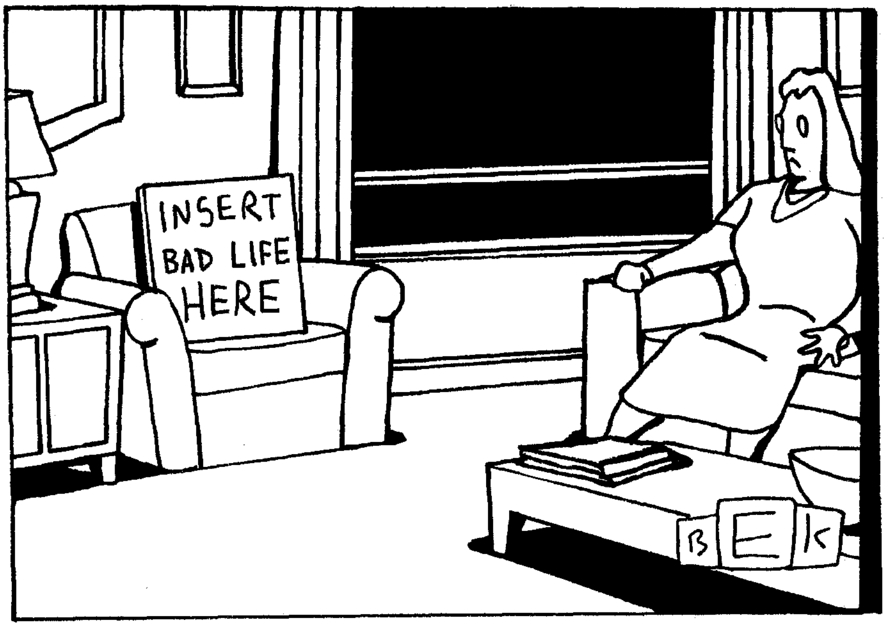
Colonel Burt Tackaberry, the division's chief aviation officer, had been the first pilot in the air early on the morning of March 2nd, and had flown at very low altitudes over the column of retreating Iraqis. His helicopter had been an easy target, but no one had taken a shot. He had noticed Iraqi tanks with their tubes in travel-lock position and pointed away from a forward target. "My first order was to go up and make sure the causeway was cut," he recalled. It was still open, and he could see that about a hundred vehicles had already crossed over it. He was then ordered to make sure that no further vehicles got away. ("I never say no to McCaffrey," he told me.) In an effort to get the vehicles to stop, he fired a few rounds over them. When they didn't stop, he fired a TOW missile at the first vehicle, which turned out to be an ammunition truck. ("It exploded for hours.") Once that vehicle was hit, none of the others could get around it. There was a panic. "All the people took off to the marshes and squatted down," Tackaberry said. "They were scared to death." There was still no opposition. Later that morning, McCaffrey, running the division from Ware's Bradley, got on the radio and ordered the division's missile-firing Apache helicopters—Tackaberry's helicopters—to begin a full assault.

The division log placed the time of McCaffrey's first known battle order at five minutes after nine o'clock. According to Log Item 74, McCaffrey directed that the causeway "be targeted"—thus blocking the basic escape route for the retreating forces. The division's Apache helicopters were to "engage from south with intent of terminating engagement." Within moments, the assault was all-out. One company reported that it had engaged a force of between a hundred and two hundred Iraqi "dismounts." By ten o'clock, division headquarters had begun receiving reports of extensive damage to the Iraqi forces. One group of Apache helicopters reported in mid-morning, "Enemy not firing back, they are jumping in ditches to hide." Forty minutes later, according to another log item, McCaffrey ordered artillery to be "used in conjunction with personnel sweep to 'pound these guys' and end the engagement."

The Iraqis, unable to continue driving to the north, because of the bombed-out causeway, were easy targets. In "Lucky War," an appraisal of the Gulf War published in 1994, the Army historian Colonel Richard M. Swain (Ret.) noted, "One can continue to be troubled, however, with the fact that most of the Iraqis killed seem to have been headed north or simply milling around—and not into the defender's lines, notwithstanding that some of their number quite clearly seem to have initiated the combat by opening fire when U.S. forces approached their position." Two other facts remain "somewhat disturbing," Swain added: that "only a small number of Iraqis seem to have acted with hostility that morning," and that the Iraqis, when fired upon, had been many miles beyond the 24th Division's front lines, as they existed on the morning of the ceasefire.

Some soldiers who found themselves ordered into the battle remained dubious. Stuart Hirstein, the 124th Military Intelligence Battalion sergeant whose unit had earlier rushed to help a supposedly beleaguered combat company in Ware's battalion only to find the Iraqis sunning themselves on top of their tanks, now watched as the division's missile-firing Apache helicopters systematically began to annihilate the tanks. "It pissed me off," Hirstein told me. "They were not firing."

"That was a brilliant observation, but it was poorly phrased."



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Charles Sheehan-Miles recalled that his 1st Brigade tank platoon also had been told that morning to rush to the rescue of an American unit near Highway 8 that was under attack by a division of Iraqi soldiers. "We went up the road blowing the shit out of everything. It was like going down an American highway—people were all mixed up in cars and trucks. People got out of their cars and ran away. We shot them." Sheehan-Miles said that at least one of his victims was in civilian clothing. "My orders were to shoot if they were armed or running. The Iraqis were getting massacred."

James Manchester was listening to the radio and heard Colonel Ware receive permission to engage. "All of a sudden, all hell breaks loose," he said. "It's surreal." At one point, the battalion's tanks were so eager to fire on the retreating Iraqi forces that they moved off an embankment and got mired helplessly in the sand. If the Iraqis had any intention of continuing the war, Manchester explained, the immobilized American tanks made perfect targets. The tanks were "helpless," but kept volleying cannon fire at the Iraqis as they were being pulled out of the sand by tow trucks. What happened along the causeway, he said, was "fucking murder."

"What we did was just seal the oilfield off so he"—the enemy—"couldn't get out," Le Moyne told the Army oral historian. "Yup, it's about fifteen kilometres long and ten to fifteen kilometres wide. . . . So by using artillery we were able to seal the top and the bottom of it, and I'll tell you, that once we did that the panic began to set in. . . . The Apaches strewed panic and when the columns started rolling up there was just absolute pandemonium. Everybody began to break and run. Run in blind fear and terror. . . . A Hellfire missile hitting a T-72 tank—it is an absolute catastrophic destruction. The turret absolutely separates and blows off a hundred feet in the air, a hundred yards away."

The 24th Division continued pounding the Iraqi column throughout the morning, until every vehicle moving toward the causeway—tank, truck, or automobile—was destroyed. McCaffrey, in a written response to a question, reported that his forces had removed a hundred and eighty-seven tanks and armored vehicles from the Iraqi arsenal, along with four hundred or more trucks. The Battle of Rumaila was closely reviewed at the war's end by an analyst for the C.I.A., who confirmed that the Iraqi losses were great. The toll included at least a hundred tanks from the Hammurabi division. "It's like eating an artichoke," one colonel had said of combat to Captain Bell. "Once you start, you can't stop."

One of the destroyed vehicles was a bus, which had been hit by a rocket. The precise number of its occupants who were injured or killed is not known, but they included civilians and children. One of the first Americans at the scene was Lieutenant Charles W. Gameros, Jr., a Scout platoon leader, who called in a Medevac team for the victims. At the time, he was "frustrated" by what he saw as needless deaths, Gameros recalled in an interview. "Now I look at it sadly," he said. Unresisting Iraqis had been slain all morning, but the deaths of the children troubled many soldiers.

Later that afternoon, a platoon sergeant informed Charles Sheehan-Miles that he and a few colleagues might be handed a grisly mission. "He said, 'We've blown away a busload of kids,' and warned us that we were going to get called for a burial mission," Sheehan-Miles recalled. Dirty details were a way of Army life, but this one would be special. "The sergeant gave us a heads-up so we could prepare ourselves." The call never came.

A NEW WAY OF LOOKING AT OURSELVES

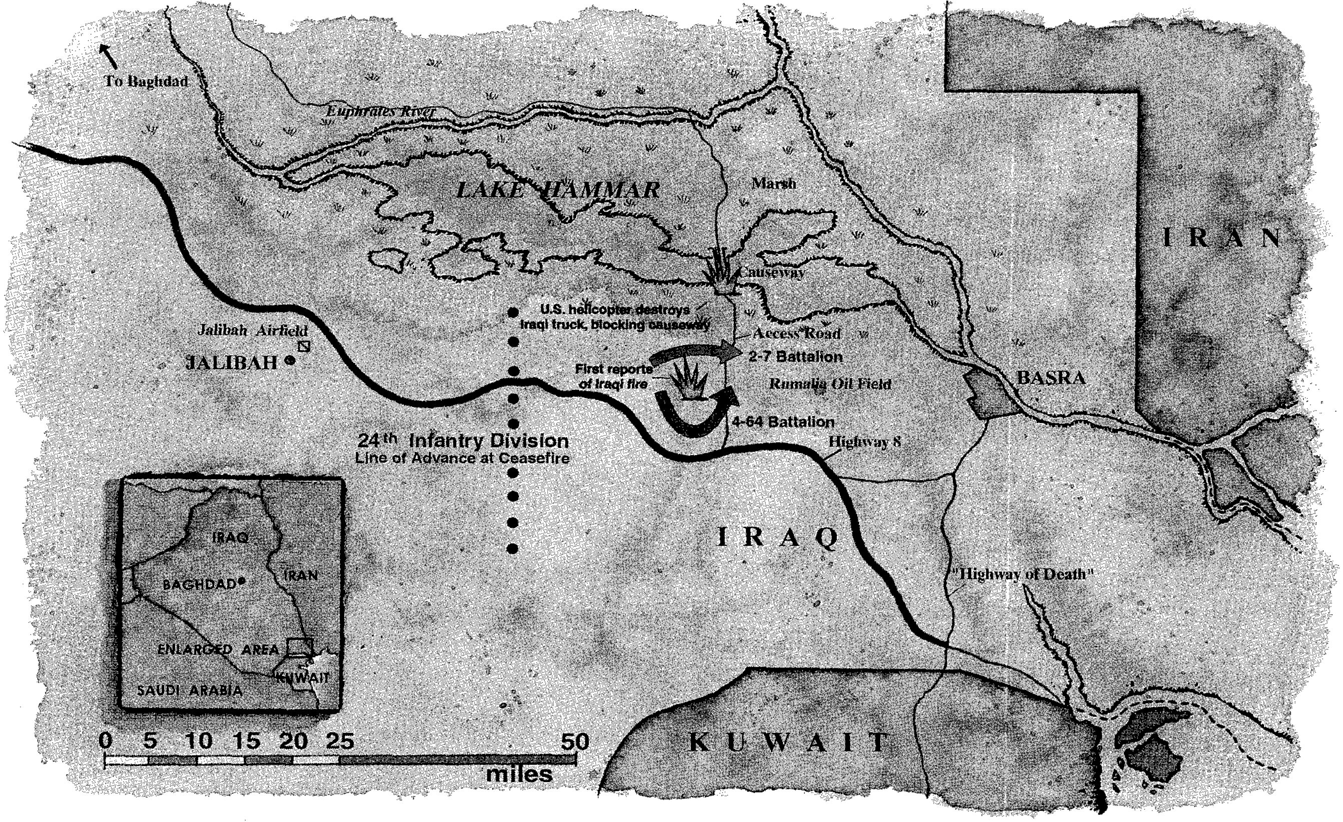
McCaffrey was triumphant at battle's end. "He was smiling like a proud father," John Brasfield told me. The young soldier got a good look at the commanding general, because the 2-7 Scouts had something McCaffrey wanted: Soviet and Iraqi flags. The flags were not battle trophies but had been pulled down by the Scouts very early that morning while they were walking through a deserted Soviet construction plant along Highway 8. "We got orders to drive up after the battle and present him with the flags," Brasfield recalled. "McCaffrey and Ware were surveying the battlefield from the back of the Bradley." James Manchester thought the scene almost comical: "He wanted that flag. It was very important that he get the flag." The soldiers were later told that McCaffrey had made a gift of one of the flags to General Schwarzkopf.

Le Moyne was jubilant as well. At the end of the battle, David Pierson writes in "Tuskers," Le Moyne showed up at battalion headquarters. "Hot damn," he exclaimed, according to Pierson. "I've killed more tanks today as an infantryman than my daddy did as a tanker in all of World War II." He told the Army historian, "This whole operation has been a practical demonstration of what happens when you do things right. For the right kind of reasons. This war has had no

Lieutenant Calleys in it. . . . Has no Jane Fondas. It's just a very professional army.”

That afternoon, Le Moyne took Linda Suttlehan on a helicopter tour. “I flew around expecting to see a battlefield,” Suttlehan told me. Instead, she saw “millions of footprints in the sand” amid hundreds of smoking vehicles. “I thought, Wow. This is not the kind of battle I thought I'd see.”

A couple of evenings later, Pierson was driving toward the causeway. “It must have been a nightmare along this road as the Apaches dispensed death from five kilometers away one vehicle at a time,” he writes. “I stopped as a familiar smell wafted through the air. . . . It was the smell of a cookout on a warm summer day; the smell of a seared steak.”


To Baghdad
Euphrates River
LAKE HAMMAR
Marsh
IRAN
Causeway
U.S. helicopter destroys Iraqi truck, blocking causeway
Jalibah Airfield
JALIBAH
Access Road
2-7 Battalion
First reports of Iraqi fire
Rumaila Oil Field
BASRA
4-64 Battalion
Highway 8
24th Infantry Division
Line of Advance at Ceasefire
IRAQ
"Highway of Death"
IRAQ
BAGHDAD
IRAN
ENLARGED AREA
SAUDI ARABIA
KUWAIT
0 5 10 15 20 25 50
miles
KUWAIT

March 2nd: The movement of McCaffrey's forces after the ceasefire set the stage for a collision with retreating Iraqi troops.

MIKE REAGAN

James Manchester also wandered among the dead after the battle, and he began describing the scene during an interview, telling me about the vast number of “burning vehicles and burning bodies.” He stopped talking, and began to weep.

Sometime after the battle, an interpreter for the 124th Military Intelligence Battalion interrogated a captured Iraqi tank commander who, according to an officer in the 124th, plaintively asked again and again, “Why are you killing us? All we were doing was going home. Why are you killing us?”

After the engagement, reporters were flown by helicopter to McCaffrey's assault command headquarters for a briefing and interviews. McCaffrey praised the “initiative, intellect, and determination” of his troops, and added that “Saddam Hussein still doesn't know what hit him.” He also said, “We dismantled the Iraqi Army, reduced it to a third of what it had been.” McCaffrey gave the press corps a statistical rundown of miles travelled, weapons confiscated, prisoners captured, and tanks and trucks demolished. An officer in his command post recalled that “one of the constant themes” was the General's belief that “we hadn't destroyed enough.”

Analysts in Washington and at General Schwarzkopf's headquarters were skeptical of McCaffrey's claim that the Iraqis fired first. A senior Iraq analyst for the C.I.A. told me that he and his colleagues had concluded almost immediately that there was “no way” the retreating Iraqi forces opened fire on the 24th Division. People at the C.I.A. understood that the Hammurabi tanks had a much more important mission than continuing an already lost war: more than half the Republican Guard units made their way back to Baghdad and helped to keep Saddam Hussein in power.

Military analysts at the coalition headquarters asked to view the battle films that were automatically recorded by cameras on board each Apache helicopter. The footage clearly showed, one officer told me, that the Iraqi tanks were in full retreat when the attack began, and in no way posed a threat to the American forces. “These guys were in an off-road defensive position—deployed in a perimeter,” the analyst added. Once the American attack reached full force, some Iraqi vehicles did attempt to return fire. “We saw T-72s in battle lines, firing away blindly in the air. They didn't know what was killing them, but they were gamely shooting—knowing they would die.” (An American could be overheard on the footage shouting, as a missile tore into an Iraqi vehicle, “Say hello to Allah!”)

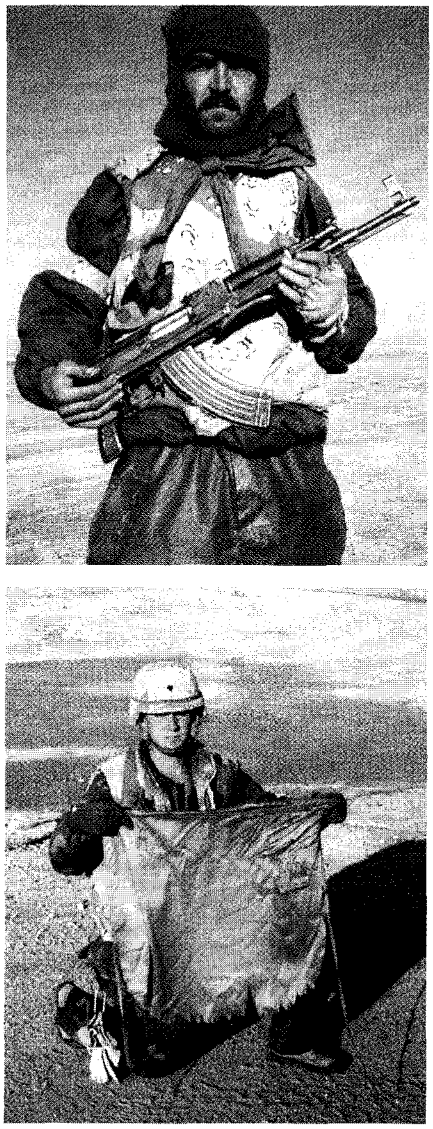
It was clear at the Pentagon, too, that something had gone awry. One colonel assigned at the time to monitor war reports at the National Military Command Center—he is now a major general, and still on active duty—told me that the reports from the 24th Division were extremely "unsettling," because "it made no sense for a defeated army to invite their own death. It didn't track with anything we knew about the theatre. It came across as shooting fish in a barrel. Everyone was incredulous."

The disquiet reached into XVIII Corps headquarters, where doubts about McCaffrey's attack were widespread. On March 3rd, General Luck, McCaffrey's immediate boss, flew to the 24th Division headquarters to ask McCaffrey what had gone on. Luck, who retired from the Army with four stars, said of McCaffrey, "I have a deep and abiding respect for anyone who serves his country." But, he added, speaking carefully, "I felt when I was in command I had a parental responsibility to my soldiers. You don't bring any limelight on yourself. Better to give it to your soldiers.

"I went straight up there," Luck went on. "I asked all the people I suspected, 'What went on? Why did it happen at this time?' I went up in a positive way and looked them in the eye. Everybody said, 'This is a fair deal.'" The Army, he added, "has built everything on trust and responsibility. I've got to respect what they say. When you give them every opportunity to say what happened and nothing is said, what do you do?" Luck's dilemma was acute: an official inquiry was unlikely to produce any evidence to contradict McCaffrey's account, and would have undermined the Army's victory in the war.

Colonel Frank Akers, who retired as a brigadier general, accompanied Luck on his visit to the division's headquarters. "He was worried," Akers said of Luck. The anxiety was shared by many on the staff of XVIII Corps. "Deep down, there were several of us who said, 'Something doesn't feel right about this,' " Akers told me. " 'It doesn't quite add up.' " The response to Luck's questioning at 24th Division headquarters didn't help. McCaffrey's people were "kind of looking at their feet and shuffling around," Akers said.

One of Luck's questions caused consternation, Patrick Lamar told Army investigators in 1991. Luck "turned around and said, 'How's the ceasefire line going?' We said, 'What ceasefire line?' " Lamar's staff showed the Corps commander the division's ceasefire deployment lines, as of March 2nd. Luck said, "This isn't the right one, fellows." Lamar, the loyal soldier, took the blame. "My guys screwed up," he said. He told Luck that the division had deployed forward because someone made an innocent mistake and got the coördinates wrong. McCaffrey said nothing.



Edward Walker, top, with an AK-47, was the Scouts' demolition expert; after the March 2nd battle, John Brasfield, bottom, presented a Soviet flag to McCaffrey.

Lamar laughed at himself as he told me the story eight years later. "McCaffrey played stupid in front of Luck," he said, adding that McCaffrey's getting the coördinates wrong had been anything but a mistake.

A few days after the battle, McCaffrey and the other Army generals who had helped win the war took part in an extended review and planning meeting at King Khalid Military City. The talks were headed by Lieutenant General Yeosock, who, as the Third Army commander, had been responsible for much of the Army's war planning. He was assisted by his operations officer, Brigadier General Steven L. Arnold. One of the first steps in the review, according to some of the officers who participated, was to discuss and compare the reporting of each division—the logs, journals, and situation reports—with the available satellite data fixing the division's location. The officers did not dispute McCaffrey's claim that the Iraqis had fired first, but the overriding issue was the most basic one of all: why had the 24th Division moved during the ceasefire into the path of the retreating Iraqis? McCaffrey, in a May 8th letter to *The New Yorker*, stated that all the appropriate headquarters always knew his position. "U.S. Army elements in Desert Storm," the letter said, "were the first military force in history that almost always knew exactly where we were." The 24th Division "never falsely reported its position," McCaffrey wrote. "I never did so and never instructed any of the soldiers under my command to do so."

A number of generals at the King Khalid commanders' conference remember it differently. Most of the position reports to higher headquarters during the war were accurate to within a few dozen metres, General Ronald H. Griffith (Ret.), who commanded the 1st Armored Division in the war, recalled. "In Barry's logs," Griffith added, "the distances were off dramatically—dozens of miles." McCaffrey spent much of the meeting insisting that he needed to adjust his record, and was finally permitted to do so. "We all laughed about it," the general said. "If we'd known that he was rewriting history, we'd have protested more."

The general's point was that the 24th Division was not always where McCaffrey said it was. "Barry would tell you where he was going or where he had been," General Yeosock told me later, "but his division isn't there. Some commanders will tell you where they're going; others will not." For General Arnold and the Third Army planners who were plotting the Iraqi retreat, McCaffrey's antics masked a consequential discrepancy. They did not know that the 24th Division would be blocking the causeway over Lake Hammar. "We gave the Iraqis an area" of safe passage, which included the causeway, Arnold told me. "We

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didn't know there were two American brigades there. We would not have sent the Iraqis there." The planners would have told the Iraqis to get home another way. None of the assembled generals, of course, had any reason to suspect that an official investigation would take place into the March 2nd counterattrack, and the potential significance of McCaffrey's inexact reporting escaped everyone at King Khalid Military City. Arnold recalled, "We took it as an honest mistake and attempted to sort it out."

According to the Army historian Richard Swain, who was the only outsider allowed to attend the review, McCaffrey arrived without any detailed records, and came close to turning the proceedings into a shambles. "He got dates all wrapped around the axle," Swain said, and unsuccessfully tried to reconcile his version of events with the versions of others. The goal of Arnold's conference, Swain explained, was to create a broad narrative sequence of what had happened, on a day-by-day, hour-by-hour basis, during the war. McCaffrey "kept on insisting that things happened in different time frames. He was confused, and, being McCaffrey, assumed everyone else was wrong and he was right." At one point, Swain said, McCaffrey was arguing about which day was which. By then, he said, the conference had degenerated into "an attempt to get McCaffrey's times right."

McCaffrey remained triumphant. According to "Tuskers," he told his troops before they flew back to Fort Stewart, "You knocked them to their goddam knees in the opening day of the war and they never got up." Later in the speech, he said, "You knocked them to their knees because they were like an eighth-grade team playing with pro football players." He had never been "more proud of American soldiers in my entire life as watching your attack on 2 March. . . . It's fascinating to watch what's happening in our country. God, it's the damnedest thing I ever saw in my life. It's probably the single most unifying event that has happened in America since World War II. . . . The upshot will be that, just like Vietnam had the tragic effect on our country for years, this one has brought back a new way of looking at ourselves."

After the offensive, McCaffrey asked his senior aviation officer, Colonel Tackaberry, to provide him with a list of pilots who deserved the Distinguished Flying Cross. This time, Tackaberry did say no to his commander. Or, at any rate, he didn't say yes. There was a second request, and then a third. Tackaberry refused. "I put it in writing, and said, 'I do not believe that any of these people deserved it.'" His reasoning was simple: none of his pilots had flown in a sustained battle, with the enemy firing at them. "Our pilots were killing from three or four miles away," he said, and were not in a "battle," as the authorized Army history later reported. He never gave McCaffrey any names.

There was a final Gulf War assignment for Major Brennan as well. McCaffrey ordered him to find two Saudi Arabian camels and transport them to Fort Stewart, where they could serve as constant reminders of the division's success in the desert. "I'm the camel guy," Brennan told me. "Got the mission personally from him. He said, 'I want a mascot.'" Two camels were found, with the aid of the Saudi Arabian government, but the U.S. Department of Agriculture refused to allow them into the country. McCaffrey persisted. "We ended up buying some from a farmer somewhere in Indiana," Brennan said.

III—THE INVESTIGATIONS

THE WHITE FLAG

When the 24th Division returned to the United States, not long after the March 2nd attack, there was a tumultuous rally at Fort Stewart. The Gulf War generals became instant national heroes. "We had given America a clear win at low casualties in a noble cause," Colin Powell wrote in "My American Journey," his 1995 memoir, "and the American people fell in love again with their armed forces."

At Fort Stewart and at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, however, word began spreading that some things had gone very wrong in the war. Shortly after returning from Iraq, Sergeant Steven Larimore gathered five of his colleagues from the Ground Surveillance Radar teams of the 124th Military Intelligence Battalion, and walked into the Fort Stewart branch of the Army's Criminal Investigations Division, or C.I.D., office and met with two investigators.

The men described what they had seen on March 1st, when Iraqis in civilian clothes had been shot near a schoolhouse while holding a white flag. "All six of us went and told what we knew," Larimore said to me. "The basic tenet was that we didn't see anybody shooting at us" before the 1st Brigade platoon opened fire. Larimore had the support of his company commander, Lieutenant Charles Febus. Michael Sangiorge, one of Larimore's crew members, was anxious about going to the C.I.D. "Are we going to get in trouble?" he recalled asking.

The C.I.D. is known inside the Army as a "stovepipe" command—one whose chain of command leads directly to the chief of staff, in Washington. The goal is to insulate the reporting and investigation of any wrong-doing from a local division commander, who has no interest in prosecutions that could damage his career. Such interference is known as "command influence."

Larimore and his colleagues heard nothing more from the C.I.D., and continued with their day-to-day assignments. The next step gave everyone pause. Colonel Le Moyne, the 1st Brigade commander, wanted to meet after work with the men in the chain of command—including Larimore, Lieutenant Febus, and the commander of the 124th Battalion, Lieutenant Colonel Robert Reuss. "Evidently," Larimore told me, "the C.I.D. stovepipe didn't work." Once in Le Moyne's office, Larimore said, "We got this big long speech about how we had never been in combat or in a firefight. We didn't know what it was like. He ripped us pretty good."

Febus, who is now a legal officer in the Army Reserve, was appalled by Le Moyne's intervention, which took place before any of the issues were officially investigated. "It was totally one-sided, totally confrontational," he told me. "Instead of 'What did you see?' or 'What was going on?' it was 'You haven't been in a firefight. You don't know what you saw.' He was accusing my soldiers of not knowing what was going on—of not being squared away," he said. "If his beef was the way it got reported, he should have said that. If his beef was what they saw, I got a problem with that." Sergeant Larimore did not back off in the meeting, Febus said.

Le Moyne also criticized Lieutenant Colonel Reuss, the battalion commander, because his subordinates had made a report to the C.I.D. without Reuss's prior approval—approval that was unnecessary under Army regulations. Reuss said little during the meeting, Febus recalled. (Reuss, who is now retired, told me recently that he had "no recollection whatsoever" of the meeting.) Le Moyne's intent seemed obvious: to get the men to withdraw their complaint. "I was biting my lip to keep from getting in trouble," Febus said.

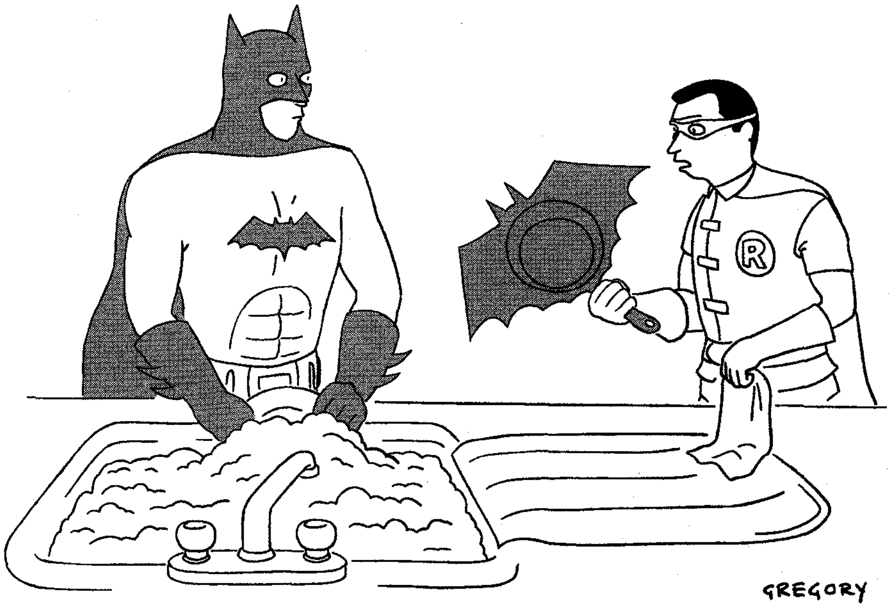
When I interviewed Le Moyne recently, he defended his meeting with Larimore and the other complainants as merely an attempt "to cut down on confusion. You gather the key people all in one place, so there's no misunderstanding." His message to the G.S.R. teams, he said, was that their allegations "would be investigated fully and completely." He continued, "On issues of morality and integrity, there is no substitute for looking them dead in the eye and telling them of their rights. . . . McCaffrey's guidance to the chain of command was that any report of any irregularity had to be investigated—every suspicion, war story, fairy tale, and rumor."

I told Le Moyne that some of the young enlisted men felt that his message was one not of reaffirming their rights but of intimidation.

"Absolutely untrue," Le Moyne responded. "The only surprise I had is that they lacked confidence in their chain of command"—that is, in Lieutenant Colonel Reuss—"not to take it to him first. There are no secrets in a military unit. Soldiers talk. Why, months later, had they not discussed this with their chain of command?"

Nonetheless, Le Moyne's showdown meeting badly rattled some of the young radar operators. One battalion officer told me, "The men were terrified—they said, 'We've got the Big Green Machine going after us.'"

Le Moyne's next step was to authorize a captain in his brigade to conduct an informal investigation, known as an



"Don't you think the saucepans are overkill?"

AR15-6, and file a report. Such a step was perfectly legal. However, a number of senior Army lawyers, in interviews for this article, questioned Le Moyne's judgment. "As a general rule," one military lawyer said, serious allegations should be "thoroughly examined by an unbiased, neutral party outside of your command. You have a charge of deaths—allegations that rise above the norm. Having a captain? Why do it that way? Is he"—the captain—"trying to come up with results his boss wants?"

A few weeks after Le Moyne's meeting with Larimore and his teammates, the officers and men of the 124th Battalion were again summoned to his office, this time to listen to the results of the brigade's investigation. There were no surprises. "The captain laid out the course of his investigation," Larimore told me. "He said there was a group who observed no weapons" among the civilians who had been shot and "there were also people who said they saw weapons and muzzle flashes" from the Iraqi civilians. The captain then concluded that the allegations of wrongful death were "unsubstantiated."

In Le Moyne's view, the case was now closed. The investigation, he said, had produced a series of witnesses who "totally refuted the allegations." After the captain's report, Le Moyne recalled, "I asked Larimore very specifically, 'Do you understand what's been said here?' and he said yes. 'Do you agree with what's been found?' He said yes."

Larimore's recollection of the encounter is rueful. "For some reason," he explained, "I was tagged as the ringleader. Le Moyne asked me if I was satisfied. I wasn't going to argue with an O-6"—a colonel. "I told him that I was glad my soldiers could see the Army had a system to deal with things." Larimore, who is still on active duty in Army intelligence, shrugged and said, "I didn't like Colonel Le Moyne or the way he did business. I know what I saw."

Charles Febus, speaking of Larimore and the others, said, "They did their duty and filed their report. And the Army chose to do what it did."

THE HOSPITAL BUS

Specialist 4 Edward Walker was tense, irritable, and quick to take offense after his experiences with the 2-7 Scouts. He returned to the 5th Engineer headquarters in Saudi Arabia around March 6th and immediately got into a dispute with a battalion officer who wanted him to turn in an Iraqi pistol he'd kept as a war souvenir. "I wasn't even there five minutes and they told me, 'Give me your pistol,' " Walker related. "I got pissed and I start screaming and yelling. 'No, you're not going to take this. I been out there getting shot at. You motherfuckers—out there shooting unarmed prisoners,' and stuff like this."

Within a few days, Walker found himself telling his story to a lawyer at a nearby Air Force base. He remembered little about the meeting, but he did recall that 1st Sergeant Rex A. Wertz, Sr., approved it. (Wertz, now living in retirement in Pennsylvania, confirmed Walker's account, telling me that "All I know is that this guy Walker said he wanted to talk to the I.G. and we let him go.")

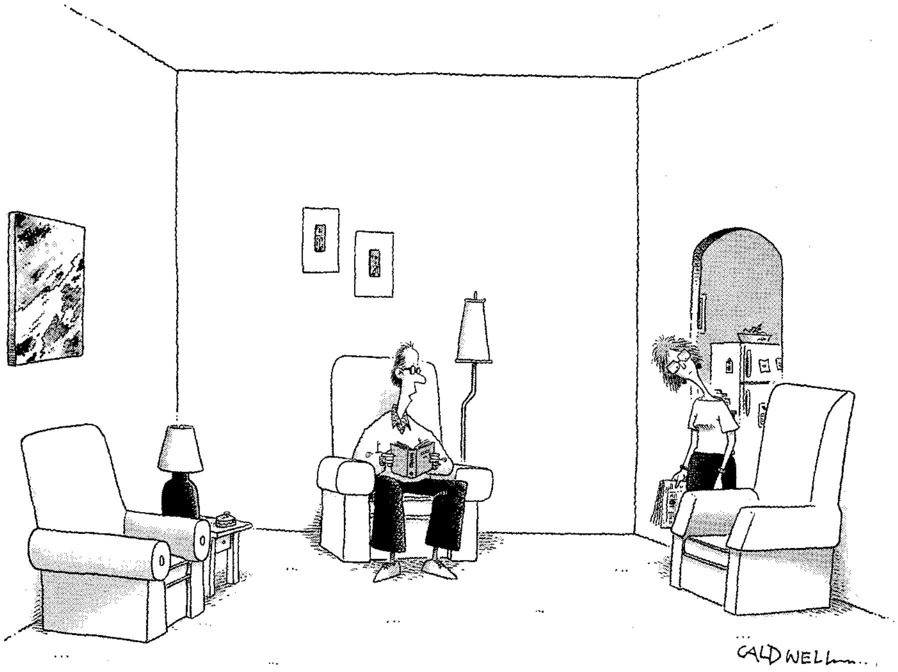
Walker returned to Fort Leonard Wood and soon found himself going three times to Fort Stewart, because the 1st Brigade had convened a second AR15-6 inquiry, into his allegations. Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Kight was the brigade's executive officer—that is, Le Moyne's most senior deputy. Walker recalled spending hours at one of the sessions going through maps and documents in an attempt to recount the incident fully. When he was asked if he had seen anyone actually get shot, Walker said what he always said: he hadn't seen any prisoners fall, but he saw rounds being fired at them.

Kight's investigation absolved Ware's battalion of any wrongdoing. Le Moyne, in a conversation with me, depicted the inquiry as sweeping in its absolution. "It was not a hospital bus," he declared. "There were no wounded. They were armed Iraqi officers and soldiers." Le Moyne added that Edward Walker "wasn't even there. He was off in the

Gahan Wilson

"That's not how we make friends, Howard."

distance.” At the end of the inquiry, Le Moyne said, he brought Walker to Fort Stewart to hear the investigating officer’s report. “You have to look him in the eye,” Le Moyne told me. “It’s tough to find Walker as a credible witness. The kid never connected with the Scout platoon he was attached to. This kid never took.”



“Over here, Phyllis. I’ve moved to the center.”

Walker viewed Le Moyne’s inquiry as a coverup. “The Colonel was up there doing the talking,” Walker told me. “He was the one leading the whole thing, and he was saying ‘The Scouts’ ”—Walker’s colleagues on the battlefield—“ ‘say this didn’t happen.’ ” Walker said Le Moyne did reveal that one lieutenant in the battalion remembered seeing the prisoners before the Bradleys began shooting, but the lieutenant testified that he did not recall what happened to them. “He went through the whole thing and my story,” Walker said. “By the time he got done, the Colonel looked at me and said, ‘You haven’t got the slightest idea what you’re talking about. You were just upset and overwrought.’ ”

“That colonel was basically just reaming my tush,” Walker told me. He felt abandoned by his former colleagues. “I had nobody backing me up anymore. Everybody had changed their story.”

Sergeant Steven Mulig also felt helpless. He and a few other Scouts had been summoned to testify, but he felt that none of the brigade officers wanted to hear what they had to say. “We were all getting upset,” Mulig told me. The investigators tried to undermine the Scouts’ credibility by challenging their ability to read map coördinates and suggesting that they had no idea where the alleged shootings took place. “They made it look like we didn’t know what was going on over there,” Mulig said. Lieutenant Colonel Kight kept “beating it to death. He just let it go the way it went. It was just an officer coverup kind of thing.”

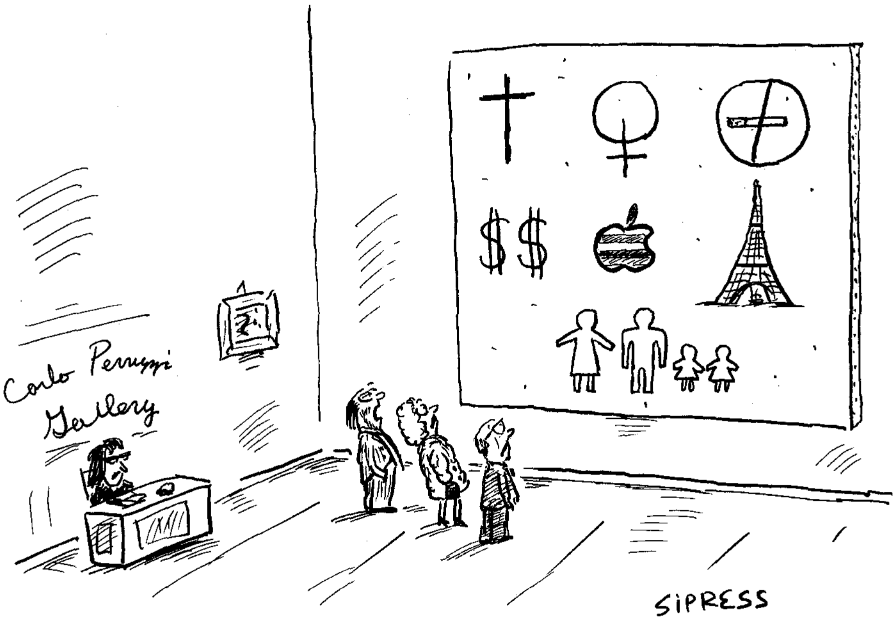
Kight’s report, as summarized by the Army, concluded that, while the Americans had fired in the direction of the Iraqis, no prisoners “had been killed or wounded in the incident. . . . No bodies, graves, or wounded were attributed to this incident—Iraqi or friendly.” Another finding, the Army report said, was that the Iraqis who died had contributed to their own demise: “The Iraqi vehicles carrying surrendering soldiers had not been marked with white flags.”

Former Lieutenant Kirk Allen, the Scout commander, who is now a major serving in Georgia, told me that all the witnesses from the Bradley companies denied that their bullets had struck any prisoners. Two important witnesses, he added, turned out to be Le Moyne and the brigade executive officer, Major Benjamin Freakley, whose armored vehicles were determined to have been in a position to see the shooting—and both men subsequently testified that they saw no wrongdoing. One Army lawyer who was on active duty at Fort Stewart in mid-1991 told me that the AR15-6 testimony even suggested that some of the Iraqis had “feigned” their surrender, and had turned themselves into prisoners with the intent of taking a shot at the Americans. “It was essentially a ruse,” he said.

Some of the lawyers in the Judge Advocate General’s office at Fort Stewart came to believe that Le Moyne was far from independent in his handling of the allegations. “Le Moyne is on the firing line,” one senior lawyer told me, “but McCaffrey is pulling the string.” Le Moyne, in one of his conversations with me, was categorical in asserting the independence of his role: “I appointed one of my brigade officers to investigate . . . and his report was that it was not true.”

McCaffrey had a different recollection of who appointed the investigators, as he told two questioners from the C.I.D. in 1991. There were, he said, “three allegations of enemy prisoners being fired on. In each case, I had appointed an investigating officer, and I said you will get to the truth of the allegations. You will interview everybody involved. . . . Which was done.”

For reasons not known, John Brasfield and James Manchester were never called to testify in the 1st Brigade’s investigation. David Collatt, their colleague on the 2-7 Scout team, testified that he didn’t actually see any prisoners get shot. But he scoffed at the brigade’s finding that none of the Iraqi prisoners had been killed or wounded: “Our Bradleys turned and started firing at the prisoners. And there was no wounded or killed? Rounds pumping right where they’re at, and they tell us nobody got hurt?” Collatt told me that he had no hard feelings toward Edward Walker for not leaving the war behind him: “Walker



"This artist is a deeply religious feminist and anti-smoking advocate, who made a lot of money in the computer industry before going off to paint in Paris, where she now lives with her husband and two little girls."

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did what he had to do. We were just glad to be alive."

"I knew I was a marked man as soon as I said something," Walker said. He was not permitted to reënlist by the authorities at Fort Leonard Wood, and he left the Army in the fall of 1991.

MITCHELL'S INQUIRY

Sometime late in the spring of 1991, three members of the 5th Engineer Battalion at Fort Leonard Wood went to the Inspector General's office on base. They told a story much like Larimore's and Walker's about the shooting of Iraqi prisoners of war by soldiers from the 1st Brigade of the 24th Division. The complaints became the responsibility of Fort Leonard Wood's Inspector General, Major Thomas Mitchell. Mitchell, who had little experience in investigations, Army law, or procedure, had spent his career in the Army as an engineer and had agreed to become Fort Leonard Wood's Inspector General only reluctantly. None of his superior officers did anything to help him out. Of the three enlisted men who made the complaint, Mitchell said, "The kids who came in were nice, and there seemed to be some validity to what they saw. But we couldn't confirm anything illegal. Even if you have a witness, if you can't substantiate it you can't report it as a finding." He did not recall their names, but he did recall that their allegations involved "several hundred" prisoners and some Iraqis who got "ripped up."

Army records show that at least one company of engineers from Fort Leonard Wood was assigned in the Gulf War to the 2-7 Battalion of the 1st Brigade. Edward Walker told me that a number of his colleagues worked closely with the various units in Charles Ware's battalion, and that some of those engineers—including, perhaps, those who made the complaint—had swept into the area along Highway 8 on the afternoon of February 27th. "Behind us was the Bradleys, and right behind them were the engineers," Walker said. "They would have seen it"—the prisoners' shootings.

It is far from clear that Mitchell, who has since left the Army, made a serious attempt to substantiate the soldiers' story. In my first conversation with him, by telephone, he told me that he had made a trip to Saudi Arabia but was unable to establish that the Iraqi soldiers who were "ripped up" were victims of wrongdoing by soldiers of the 24th. In a subsequent interview, in Missouri, where he now lives, Mitchell provided a different account. He said it was one of the enlisted men in his office who had travelled to Saudi Arabia to look into an allegation that "hundreds were involved in a shooting incident where dozens were killed." Mitchell shared his information with the C.I.D. office at Fort Leonard Wood, and was informed that the C.I.D. had previously investigated the allegation and concluded that the Iraqis had been killed in an exchange of gunfire among themselves. Mitchell said he was told, "Where they found bodies, the wounds were from Iraqi rounds. The shell casing on the ground did not match U.S. casing. We were finding Warsaw Pact ammunition on the ground."

A number of government and academic experts on the war told me that they knew of no reports during or immediately after the war of Iraqi soldiers shooting one another to prevent surrender. One analyst, Michael Eisenstadt, of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, noted that the anti-Hussein uprisings—which were all violently suppressed—did not begin in earnest until after the war and involved the selected targeting of high-level military and party officials. "Among stragglers in the war, it was every man for himself," Eisenstadt said. I subsequently asked Mitchell if he or, to his knowledge, any other government investigator had actually seen the Iraqi victims, and examined their wounds. He said no.

In the report that Mitchell prepared for his superiors at Fort Leonard Wood, he found that the 5th Engineer allegations were "unsubstantiated." A draft of those findings, which he gave me, concluded—with no evidence cited—that the Iraqis had shot each other. "In a couple of instances," the draft report said, "gunfire was exchanged within refugee groups and gunshot victims were pointed out as Republican Guard morale officers keeping tabs on Iraqi reservists. Some incidents were explained as internal vengeance and retribution among Iraqis."

Sergeant Tony Abernathy, one of the enlisted men assigned to the Inspector General's office at Fort Leonard Wood, subsequently informed me that no one from the office "went to the desert" during the investigation. Abernathy also provided me with a far different account of Mitchell's investigation. "I don't remember Mitchell doing anything about it," he said. "It was a big situation that nobody wanted to mess with at the time. We weren't equipped to handle it. I think it was not an investigation. The U.S. Army just didn't want the publicity." Abernathy is now retired; before his assignment to the Fort Leonard Wood Inspector General's office, he had spent much of his career in the Special Forces.

No one in the chain of command at Fort Leonard Wood seems to have objected to Mitchell's investigation. He was apparently doing, as Abernathy suggested, exactly what the system wanted.

THE LETTER

In August, 1991, Colonel Ernest H. Dinkel was a deputy chief of staff for the Criminal Investigation Division. Dinkel, then forty-six years old, had spent several years as an Army cop and was working out of the C.I.D.'s local headquarters in Falls Church, Virginia, near the Pentagon. "I'm walking down the hall one afternoon," he recounted recently. "And the General's secretary says, 'Don't go anywhere.' " A few moments later, Dinkel and some associates were in the office of Major General Peter T. Barry, the director of the C.I.D. command. Barry had just returned from the office of General Gordon Sullivan, the Army's Vice-Chief of Staff. The Army had a problem. A carefully typed, two-page anonymous letter had been mailed to the Army Inspector General. It appeared to have been written by an officer serving in one of McCaffrey's 24th Division command posts, for it was filled with information that only an insider could have known. "That's what scared everybody," Dinkel recalled. "This was from someone who was there."

The letter contained a number of allegations that were certain to be explosive if they turned out to be true. Two in particular stood out. The letter alleged that McCaffrey was guilty of a "war crime" in his March 2nd assault on the retreating Iraqis, and had urged his brigade commanders "to find a way for him to go kill all of those bastards." The letter also claimed that 24th Division soldiers had "slaughtered" Iraqi prisoners of war after seizing an airfield on the fourth day of the war.

The letter included a threat that, as its writer obviously understood, would get the attention of the Army's leadership, which was still relishing the warm glow of the Gulf War. "If you chose not to investigate, so be it," the letter said. "Tapes, documents, and photos exist. Jack Anderson"—the columnist—"would be very interested."

Given the extent and severity of the letter's accusations, an investigation was inevitable, and Dinkel was put in charge of it. His deputy, Warrant Officer Willie J. Rowell, was the most experienced and respected C.I.D. investigator in the Washington area. The inquiry was not merely to be kept secret, as all such investigations were, but to be kept secret from every other office in the C.I.D. It was believed that public knowledge of the allegations—and they were, of course, nothing more than anonymous allegations—would be devastating to McCaffrey's career and to the Army's postwar reputation.

Colonel Dinkel and his C.I.D. team arrived at Fort Stewart in mid-August, 1991, just three weeks after Le Moyne's

"Snap out of it, Demos! You think you're the only one who's ever had waiter's block?"

Some of the prisoners taken by Lieutenant Allen's Scouts, who gave the Iraqis their own food and water. "One of the first guys who came i

1st Brigade concluded its report on the Edward Walker allegations, and well after it closed out its case on the allegations brought by Sergeant Larimore, of the 124th Military Intelligence Battalion. Both files were immediately made available to the C.I.D. In each instance, the brigade's findings were taken at face value. The cases in Le Moyne's brigade, once closed, stayed closed.

Dinkel and his crew spent the next several weeks assiduously conducting interviews and collecting data on the anonymous letter, at Fort Stewart and at Army bases across America. They spent weeks looking into the letter's charge of the slaughter of prisoners at an airfield, and could find no evidence to support it. They never focussed on the hospital-bus shootings described by Larimore and Walker.

Dinkel was most concerned with the letter's charges about McCaffrey's leadership before and after the annihilation of the Iraqis at Rumaila. One C.I.D. team flew to Fort McCoy, Wisconsin, to interview Colonel Michael MacLaren (Ret.), who, as the division's G-1, or logistics officer, had been in charge of its rear command post in Saudi Arabia.

MacLaren was told six weeks after the war that the unit no longer needed him around. MacLaren's testimony, released under the Freedom of Information Act, provided support for one of the anonymous letter's most serious charges—that a colleague had overheard McCaffrey urge his commanders on the command radio net "to find a way for him to go kill all of those bastards." MacLaren said that he had been troubled by the March 2nd engagement, especially in the months after the war, when the division spun "numerous versions of how contact was initiated by the enemy—tank fire, frontal assault, artillery, R.P.G., Sagger missile. I was surprised that there were so many versions of the truth," especially by late spring. "I thought we ought to have figured it out," he said. "After all, it was these enemy actions

as bawling," John Brasfield remembered. "I told him, 'You've surrendered. You're safe. Nothing is going to happen to you.' "

which prompted us into action." There was another troubling aspect of the March 2nd engagement, MacLaren said: "Our apparent lack of 'measured response' in light of the ceasefire. I thought we should have met enemy force with appropriate force—not necessarily overwhelming force. Even the use of force on the battlefield has its ethical restrictions." The term "turkey shoot," he said, had become "common usage within the division when describing the March 2nd engagement."

MacLaren also told the C.I.D. of a cryptic comment he said that McCaffrey made at the beginning of an after-action review meeting later in March: "Remember, the Iraqis started this one." When asked why he had not filed a formal complaint about McCaffrey's actions, MacLaren said that he had no hard evidence to back up his information. "I have no firsthand knowledge," he told the C.I.D. "I believe it may have been a bad decision on someone's part."

The C.I.D. also learned about McCaffrey's dispute with Patrick Lamar, and on August 17th Dinkel and a colleague flew to Fort Stewart to interview Lamar. Lamar, like all colonels, wanted to become a general, and he understood that volunteering his views on the events of March 2nd would do little for that ambition. And, like many Army officers, he had contempt for the C.I.D.; investigators are known as "two by twos," because they travel in pairs and conduct interviews jointly. "They're not real cops," Lamar told me.

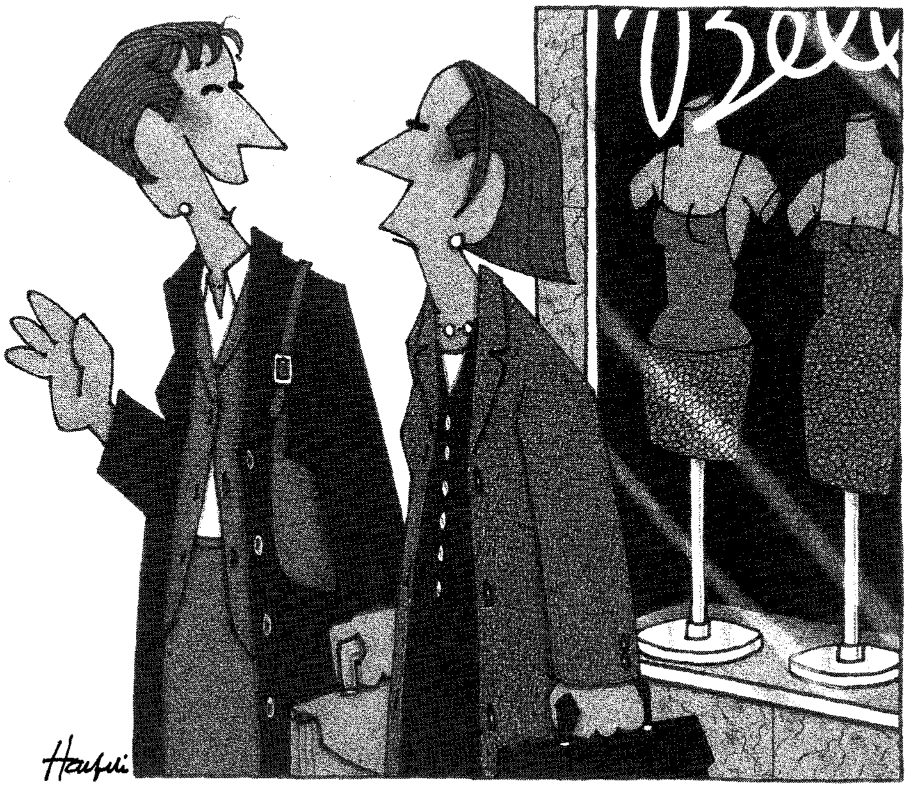
Lamar's testimony about McCaffrey alternated between praise and revelation. "He is smart," Lamar told the C.I.D. "He's a combat commander I would follow. I think he knows what he's doing—otherwise he wouldn't be where's he's at. . . . He has never treated me wrong." Nonetheless, Lamar told the C.I.D. that he considered the attack to be a violation of the ceasefire, and that the Iraqis had taken no action to provoke it. On March 2nd, Lamar testified, he had been contacted by the 1st Brigade and told that lights, from vehicles, could be seen in the distance. "I asked which way they were going," Lamar went on, "and they said they were going north"—to the causeway. "I said, 'O.K., stay away from it, you don't need to have any contact with it.' " His caution won him little favor. Hours later, Lamar said, McCaffrey "took charge" and the attack began. "I'll tell you the truth," the Colonel said, "I didn't support it because at that point in time I thought it was a slaughter. But the bottom line was he was doing what was necessary to protect the force because they had been fired on and nobody knew what these guys were liable to do." Lamar denied the anonymous letter's report that he had described McCaffrey's actions on March 2nd as a war crime, but he added, "What I did tell him was that we better make darn sure that they were fired on first or otherwise we would violate the ceasefire rule. . . . The bottom line is that he wanted to keep pushing."

The C.I.D. interview lasted for hours, Lamar says, and he was not contacted again by its investigators.

The Lamar interview convinced Dinkel that the C.I.D. was wasting its time. "Boss, we ain't got shit," he recalls telling General Barry. "This is a bullshit letter." A day or so later, Dinkel recalls, he was summoned to the Pentagon, along with General Barry, to meet with the Army's top brass in the offices of General Sullivan, the Vice-Chief of Staff. It was Dinkel's first visit to the Army's inner sanctum. There were at least six generals at the meeting, many with two or more stars on their epaulettes. A few civilian officials were also present. Dinkel says that he and General Barry were told that it was unacceptable to stop the inquiry. There was worried talk, to Dinkel's astonishment, of "another My Lai," and the C.I.D. was given a broad mandate to investigate McCaffrey.

The C.I.D. returned to Fort Stewart and began a series of interviews there, and at Army bases around the country. Dinkel and his colleagues worked hard over the next few weeks—more than a hundred and fifty men and women were interviewed. Had a soldier volunteered information about a crime, the C.I.D. most certainly would have taken the complaint seriously, and begun an inquiry. But few soldiers report crimes, because they don't want to jeopardize their Army careers.

The interviews went on, the questions were asked, and the answers duly transcribed. In the C.I.D. interviews, released under the Freedom of Information Act, soldier after soldier, including those in Ware's 2-7 battalion, reports that he knew nothing about the mistreatment of prisoners. Several thought that the Iraqi prisoners, far from being abused, were treated too well. Many testify that the Iraqis engaged in a variety of hostile acts on March 2nd. The inescapable fact is that Dinkel and his team were left in the dark by the senior officers of the 24th Division, and its 1st Brigade. Dinkel told me he knew nothing of allegations involving an Iraqi hospital bus or a large number of Iraqi prisoners of war: "If someone had said two hundred people, I would have remembered that." He also said he never heard the name Edward Walker, adding, "I don't know anybody at Fort Leonard Wood."



"I used to hate my body. Now, instead, I hate the forces that conspired to make me hate my body."

JUST A LINE ON THE GROUND

On August 27th, Dinkel and Warrant Officer Rowell conducted a two-hour interview with McCaffrey in his office at Fort Stewart. When they arrived, McCaffrey was "all smiles," Dinkel said, and greeted them cordially. There was one jarring note, however. Before the questioning could begin, Dinkel recalled, the General "took off his jacket and showed us his screwed-up arm." Dinkel felt that McCaffrey was implying that he deserved special consideration because of his war record—an implication that Dinkel told me he resented.

No such resentment showed up in the transcript of the interview, which lasted two hours. Dinkel and Rowell asked a total of eight questions. McCaffrey was asked if he was "aware" of any incident in which Iraqi prisoners were killed; whether he was "aware" of any actions by his division to provoke the Iraqis into violating the ceasefire on March 2nd; and what his understanding of the rules of engagement was. The final question was

one asked of all witnesses: "Is there anything you'd like to add to this statement?"

McCaffrey was asked nothing about Lamar's assertion that the ceasefire lines had been ignored, inadvertently or not, at the end of the war. Nor did the investigators pursue Lamar's claim that the senior staff didn't know or communicate the precise boundaries of the division's area of operations.

McCaffrey was careful, nonetheless, to explain to the C.I.D. investigators that he was having "difficulty in remembering precisely times and days"—the same issue that marred the commanders' conference at King Khalid Military City. At the ceasefire, he said, his instructions were not to go more than three or so miles east of the causeway, a map designation known as Phase Line Crush. That map designation, he added dismissively, "did not have any meaning in and of itself. It was just a line on the ground." His goal after the war was to "close the division up on our forward positions," consolidating his forces toward the front and standing by for further instructions.

He had done so by the early morning of March 2nd, he said, when the retreating Iraqis began firing at the 24th Division. The initial contact came from Iraqi infantrymen who fired R.P.G.s. "To be honest," McCaffrey said, "it struck me wrong. . . . My guess was and still is" that some of the Iraqi units "were hearing their own forces move through the area and may have interpreted that as a counterattack . . . because it sounds sort of screwy to engage an armor unit with R.P.G."—grenades that posed little threat to tanks or heavy tracked vehicles. Nonetheless, McCaffrey said, "I started forces going about this time." He ordered one of the division's Apache and Air Cavalry helicopter units to get in the air. Two flatbeds with Iraqi tanks aboard were reported to be moving down the road. "There was a lot of discussion on 'What the heck does that mean?' " McCaffrey recalled. "Because, obviously, it is not an attack." By this point, around eight o'clock in the morning, McCaffrey told the investigators, the Air Cavalry was reporting that hundreds of Iraqi vehicles were moving.

One of his commanders—presumably Le Moyne—"comes up on the net," McCaffrey said, "and he said now we are being engaged with tanks and Saggers." The brigade commander further reported that his units were taking direct fire from Iraqi T-72 tanks, with Sagger missiles, and were returning fire. "I said, 'O.K. Got it.' "

At this point, McCaffrey's description of the battlefield situation began to differ from his earlier accounts. McCaffrey told the C.I.D. that he understood from his brigade commander that "there were a couple or three battalions, near Rumaila oil field—armor, tanks." He was also told, he said, that hundreds of Iraqi vehicles had already crossed the Lake Hammar causeway. That fact "sort of surprised me because I thought the causeway was down, so I was not quite sure if they were already over there or"—and here McCaffrey added a new element—"had come out of Basra": not an army fleeing its defeat in Kuwait but one looking for a new battle. "It sounds like another brigade . . . headed up toward us." McCaffrey was now claiming he thought that the 24th Division was under threat from a large Iraqi military force from Basra, a regional center for the Republican Guard. "So we got three chunks," he concluded. "A piece north of the river; we have got a chunk in the Rumaila oil fields firing at us, and we've got some more back off to the east in a pretty dicey situation."

In the account provided to the C.I.D., McCaffrey was facing a three-pronged threat—from the Euphrates, from the infantrymen and tanks already engaging with his troops, and from Basra.

He went on, "What was I thinking at the time? Number one was: 'I am not going to lose fifteen Bradleys and tanks in one sheet of fire and have one hundred eight six killed and wounded. I flat ass wasn't going to do that. I would almost say co-equally I was extremely aware of the political implications of a ceasefire"—that many were angered because the American military was not taking the war to Baghdad. "You can bet your ass I knew that was part and parcel of it. And indeed I was joking . . . that if we make a mistake right now I will be selling ladies' underwear in Sears and Roebuck before the week is out. . . . I would not say that I was reluctant to accept the responsibility, but, baby, you'd bet your bottom dollar I knew that was going on. So I was pretty keen on knowing what the situation was and making the right calls." At some point, he added, "I finally ended up giving instructions—'O.K., whack the guys in front of you.'

"I was very proud of what we had done," he said. "I was just thrilled with that. Was I ready to fight? You are darned tootin'. And, after this battle was over on 2 March, I again gave instruc-

"I'd have been here sooner if it hadn't been for early detection."

tions and we prepared for an attack to secure the outskirts of Basra. So, had I been instructed to do so we would have executed an attack."

There were some war-crime allegations after the war, McCaffrey acknowledged, and they were fully investigated, at his insistence. "The bottom line was I said you may not drop this action until the soldiers involved understand that the Army fully investigated this allegation, which was done," he told the C.I.D. "So, my personal judgment is that no Iraqis were maltreated or killed or engaged during any struggle. Indeed, the opposite of the case, in my judgment."

Near the end of his testimony, McCaffrey summarized his views on the issue of prisoner rights and possible war crimes. As a combat commander, he said, he routinely spoke to his soldiers about honor. "To a civilian that might sound funny," McCaffrey added, "but one of those points [in his speeches] was talking about your honor as a soldier . . . When you get out there and you have helpless people in your grasp . . . If you kill or maltreat prisoners you will violate international law and create a terrible political disaster for us. But that is not important compared to the fact that you will violate your honor as a soldier."

Dinkel, who today is the principal of a Lutheran elementary school in Tampa, Florida, made clear in a series of interviews that he has had no second thoughts about the McCaffrey investigation. "The case was closed once we confirmed that rounds were indeed fired," he said. "If I had the assets that McCaffrey had, I'd have done the same thing."

Rowell isn't as sure. When he was interviewed, he was the most senior investigator in the C.I.D.—thirty-six years on the job—and its highest-ranking warrant officer. He is now an instructor at the C.I.D.'s training center at Fort Leonard Wood. "We never did think we got the whole story on everything," Rowell told me. McCaffrey had emerged as a hero from the war, and there was "some anticipation that he was to grow up and be Chief of Staff. We knew that we have senior military officers looking at their careers. There was a lot of sealed lips, and people with amnesia." Everyone's story was that the Iraqis fired first, he said, and "We never had information to the contrary. . . . Nothing to prove that they were lying to us."

Rowell said he felt that he and his fellow-investigators had established that, at best, only two rounds were fired by Iraqi forces at the 2-7 Scout platoon on the morning of March 2nd. But, regardless of his and the others' doubts about McCaffrey, he said, the Dinkel investigation "came up with nothing that would have won a trial. If you're a two-star general, you can do whatever you want to do, under the confusion of war."

STANDARDS AND ETHICS

The mere presence of the C.I.D. investigators, and their questions, posed a Catch-22 for the men and women of the 24th Division. Those who wanted to tell all about events that would tarnish the reputation of Barry McCaffrey—men like Sergeant Larimore and Edward Walker—found that their firsthand testimony wasn't enough. Without physical or documentary evidence—without some Iraqi bodies—the C.I.D. would not consider pressing charges. Others who would have talked, such as Captain Mike Bell and his young colleagues in McCaffrey's assault command post, were not contacted.

Some common understandings did emerge. General Peter Barry, the C.I.D.'s commanding officer, assured me that by the time the investigation shut down some of the Army's senior leaders realized that there was "a certain element of truth" to the allegations made by the anonymous letter writer. "Whoever wrote the letter had detailed knowledge," Barry said. "But establishing the criminality is difficult."

The issue of what to do about McCaffrey became an early litmus test for General Gordon Sullivan, the Vice-Chief of Staff, who in mid-1991 was weeks away from becoming Chief of Staff. Dinkel's voluminous report cleared McCaffrey of any criminal conduct. It was left to Sullivan to decide whether to refer many issues deal-ing with military standards and ethics to the Army Inspector General's office. The most important of these dealt with the March 2nd assault and the proportionality of McCaffrey's response to the putative Iraqi attack. Did McCaffrey violate the rules of engagement?

Sullivan chose not to press these questions. McCaffrey had been cleared by the C.I.D. of any criminal wrongdoing, and that was that. He would explain later to a colleague that McCaffrey was an "honest-to-God" hero who had moved his division farther and faster than any other general in the war. McCaffrey also had the strong support of General Schwarzkopf, whose headquarters staff in Saudi Arabia was quick to publicly endorse the March 2nd attack. (Schwarzkopf reiterated his confidence in McCaffrey's attack this spring, telling me that "the information that was relayed to me" made it clear that the 24th Division had been fired upon by the Iraqis "and, for that reason, the 24th ID [infantry division] attacked those troops.") Colin Powell, the Army general who was chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, also defended McCaffrey's offensive. "They fired on us," he told the reporter Patrick Sloyan, of *Newsday*. "It was their mistake." Later in 1991, according to a senior aide to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, "Colin, like others in Washington, heard the stories" about McCaffrey's problems with the C.I.D. and asked Gordon Sullivan about it. "In the language of the Pentagon," this person said, Powell "received reassurances" that McCaffrey had been unblemished by the inquiry. Colin Powell told me that he had no "specific recollection" of asking about McCaffrey, but added that he invariably made inquiries about an officer he was considering for an important post, such as McCaffrey was to receive.

Later in 1991, the Army got a new Inspector General—Major General Ronald H. Griffith, who, like most generals, knew through the Army grapevine that McCaffrey had emerged from the war under intense investigation. "If it had come up to us," Griffith told me, "the first thing I'd do is go to Sullivan and say, 'Chief, we've a got a problem.' " But nothing showed up. "I can't understand how the system could break down like this," Griffith, who is now retired, told me. "If it had come up to the I.G., I'd have known of it."

In his four years as Inspector General, Griffith said, he learned that "the guys will go out and do the investigations and if they determine they can't substantiate the allegations, the chief"—referring to the senior agent—"will call me and say, 'Sir, we can't find anything but there's a whole lot of stuff out there that you can't go to court with.' So you have to ask if you want to know. A lot of officers didn't want to ask about Barry McCaffrey, because you knew what the answer would be"—something negative. (One senior C.I.D. officer laughed on being told of that comment, and said that the Army's generals "didn't need to ask the C.I.D. about McCaffrey. They knew.")

McCaffrey continued to serve as commanding general of the 24th Division at Fort Stewart. Some of his fellow-generals have offered me theories about why the Army decided not to press its investigation further. "They'd just won a war and didn't want to shit in their mess kit," a retired major general told me.

A public controversy over McCaffrey's action might have raised questions about the over-all conduct of the Gulf War, they point out, and, at the least, raised public and congressional doubts about the advisability of permitting the military to conduct a war without independent press coverage. In the Gulf, the American military had tried, to an unprecedented degree, to wage a war, judge

Café de Bo
D. Reilly

"Rodin? Oh, yeah, great buns."

its success, and tell the world's press what to write about it.

By early 1992, McCaffrey, by then a lieutenant general, was serving as an assistant to Colin Powell. (The general who replaced McCaffrey at Fort Stewart quickly donated his predecessor's camels to a Savannah zoo.) His promotion, and the assumption that he would soon be promoted again, caused consternation inside the Army—with most of the complaints aimed at General Sullivan, the Vice-Chief of Staff. A year later, a group of Gulf War generals banded together to successfully lobby Sullivan not to name McCaffrey deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, one of the Army's plum assignments. The internal bickering also kept McCaffrey from being named commander of the Army forces in Europe—a job he had eagerly lobbied for.

McCaffrey got his fourth star in 1994 and an unwanted assignment, according to his aides, as commander-in-chief of the Southern Command, then based in Panama City, which was responsible for all American military forces in Central and South America. In 1996, he retired from the Army to join the Clinton Administration as the director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy—the White House drug czar. The appointment was widely seen as one that would boost Bill Clinton's standing with the military in an election year and put a hero of the Gulf War to work on America's other war. McCaffrey's new war is in Colombia, where he is the Administration's most enthusiastic supporter of a greater American military presence to counter the increasing strength of anti-government guerrilla groups.

There was no hint when McCaffrey joined the Cabinet of any lingering questions about his actions in the Gulf War. Leon Panetta, then the White House chief of staff, told me that he and his colleagues put McCaffrey through "the normal vetting process" and learned, to their surprise, that Panama was going to be his last Army assignment. "There were problems in his career—problems of speaking his own mind," Panetta recalled being told. "He'd rubbed some of his commanders the wrong way. He'd pissed off people." But that was all. There was no suggestion from anyone in the Pentagon that the issues surrounding McCaffrey were any more serious than that.

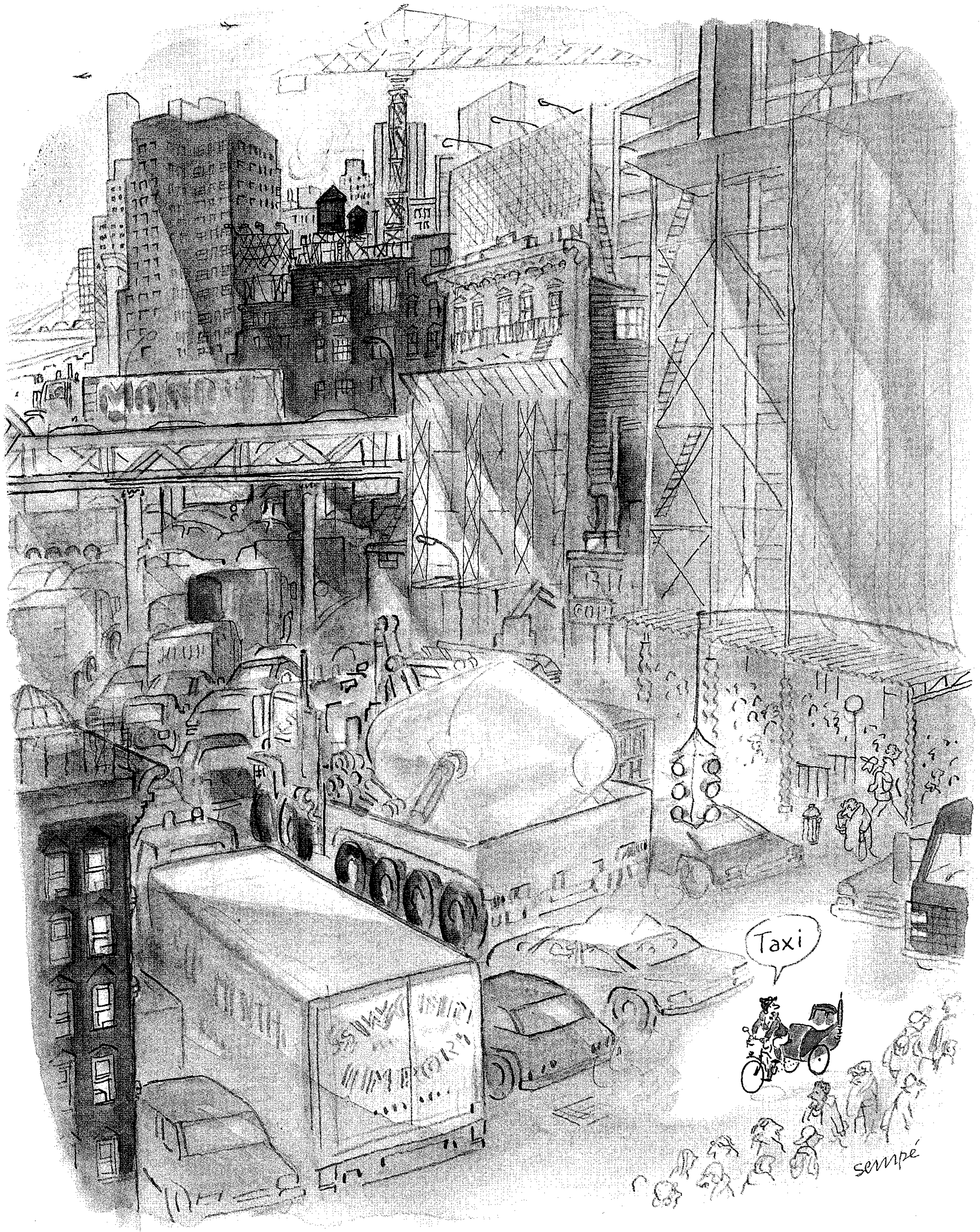
James Manchester left the Army after the war and attended Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, in Troy, New York, on a Navy R.O.T.C. scholarship. He was planning, after graduation, to join the Marine Corps. Like many veterans, he was still troubled by his war experiences—even as he prospered academically. "Everything was going good," he said. "But everything was not good." One afternoon, while browsing in the school library, he ran across Major Jason Kamiya's history of the 24th Division, which was published after the war—to McCaffrey's satisfaction. The history stated that a Scout platoon from Ware's battalion—Manchester's unit—had been "engaged by Sagger missiles" from the Iraqis and also received "direct fire from T-72 tanks" before the American counterattack. Manchester went into a funk. He stopped sleeping. He eventually resigned from the R.O.T.C. program and wrote a letter to his R.O.T.C. battalion commander, telling what he knew about the shooting of prisoners and the origin of the McCaffrey offensive. The letter was forwarded, with his permission, to the Judge Advocate General, in Washington. A few weeks later, he was interviewed by two Army officers, who arrived with a tape recorder and a warning that he would be wise to black out his name on the complaint to avoid possible recriminations. "I told them everything," Manchester said. The interview lasted several hours. A few months later, on April 7, 1994, the Army's Office of the Inspector General wrote him what it called "a final response" to his allegations.

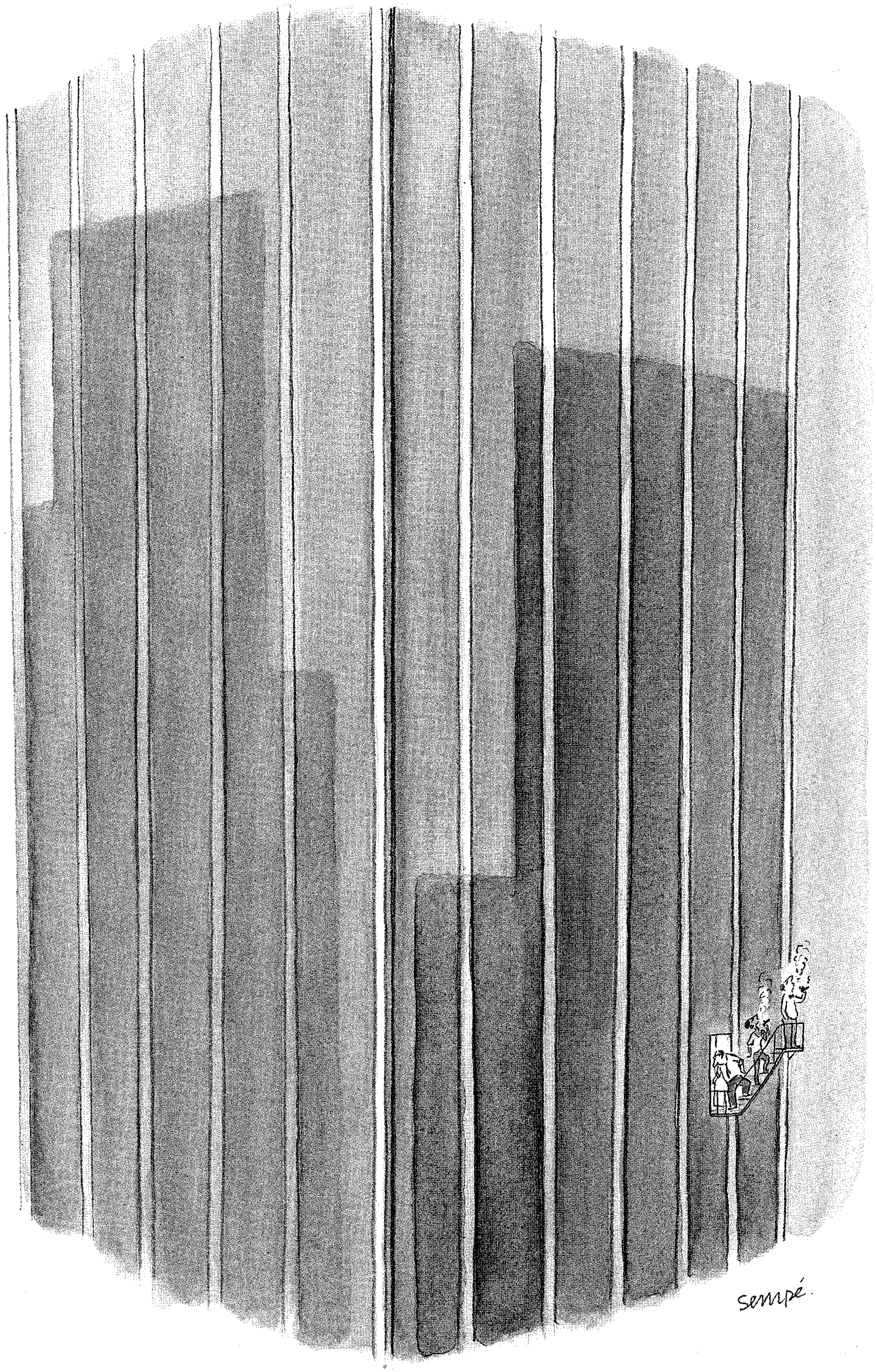
Manchester had accurately described, the letter said, an incident in which both Iraqi prisoners and his Scout platoon had been fired upon by fellow-soldiers in a battalion task force. "Another soldier"—presumably a reference to Edward Walker—had reported the incident at the time, and a "thorough and timely" AR15-6 investigation had been conducted. The letter went on to tell Manchester that the investigation had discovered "no evidence of Iraqi EPW injury or death," because his calls for a ceasefire had "served to notify the task force" that the prisoners as well as his Scout platoon "were in the zone of fire." The 1st Brigade's investigation was reviewed by legal officers in the 24th Division and by the C.I.D., the letter added, and "deemed technically and legally sufficient." Therefore, it concluded, there was no need for further inquiry, "because no proof was available a war crime had occurred." Manchester had not been summoned by that investigation, the letter went on, because he had already left the Scout platoon. (Manchester did leave the Scouts shortly after the war, but he remained on active duty at Fort Stewart until July 31, 1991.) There was a striking omission in the Army's review: the American combat unit that fired, and managed not to strike one Iraqi, was not identified. The letter spoke only of "unknown elements" of the 24th Division.

As for March 2nd, the Army informed Manchester that its earlier C.I.D. inquiry had produced an eighteen-volume report that contained the sworn testimony of a hundred and eighty witnesses. "The totality of evidence supported the finding that the Iraqi forces had initiated hostile actions," the letter said. "It was concluded that the responding use of force was appropriate to safeguard U.S. forces and within the allowable limits of the ceasefire rules of engagement." Manchester was also told that the account of the battle in the 24th Division history that triggered his letter "was not accurate." Major Kamiya had compiled the history "from his memory and his personal notes" and was not privy to the C.I.D. investigation.

Manchester graduated first in his class and is now a senior manager at a successful high-tech communications company. He remains convinced today that the Iraqis did not initiate the battle on March 2nd. "I was as patriotic as they come," he told me. "I was a gung-ho ass-kicking Commie-hating patriotic son of a bitch. I hated the Arabs. We all did. I dehumanized them. Did the Iraqis commit war crimes in Kuwait? Did they retreat back into Iraq to commit war crimes against their own people? The answer is yes to both questions. But does that make March 2nd justified? There have to be limits, even in war. Otherwise, the whole system breaks down." ♦

SKETCHBOOK BY J.J. SEMPÉ

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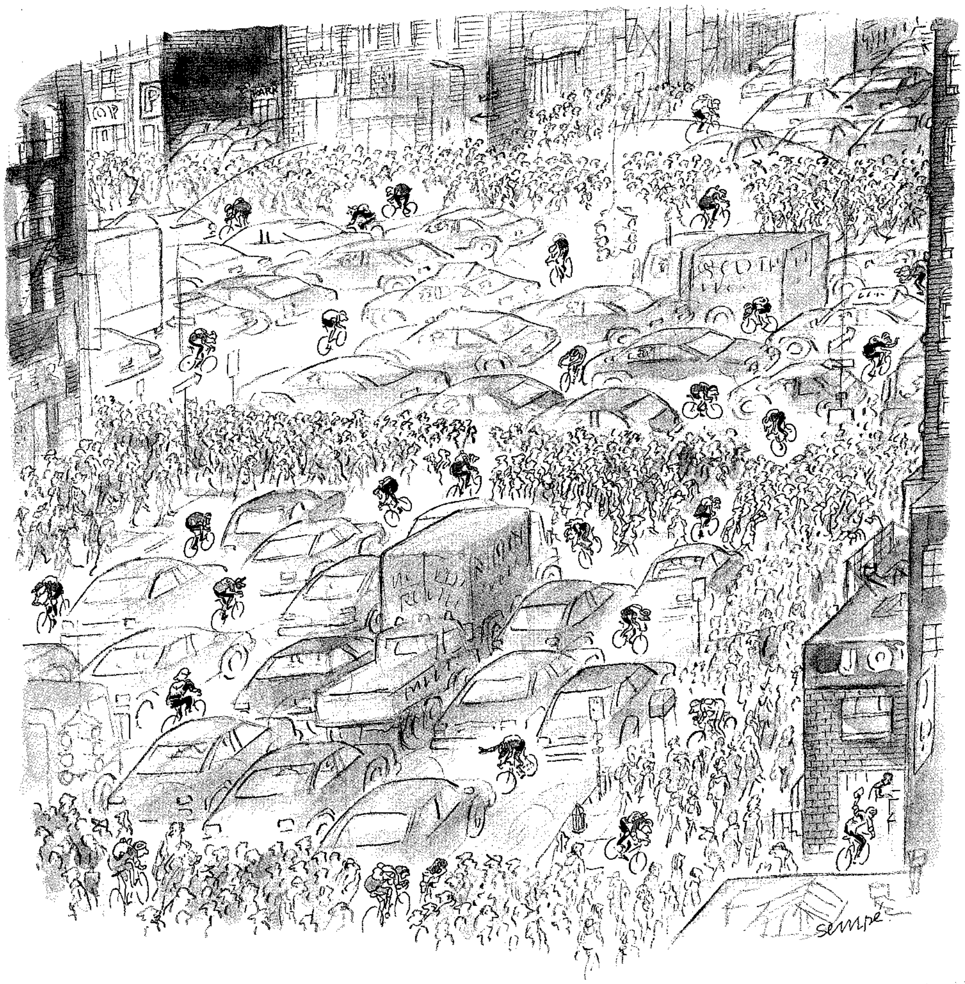
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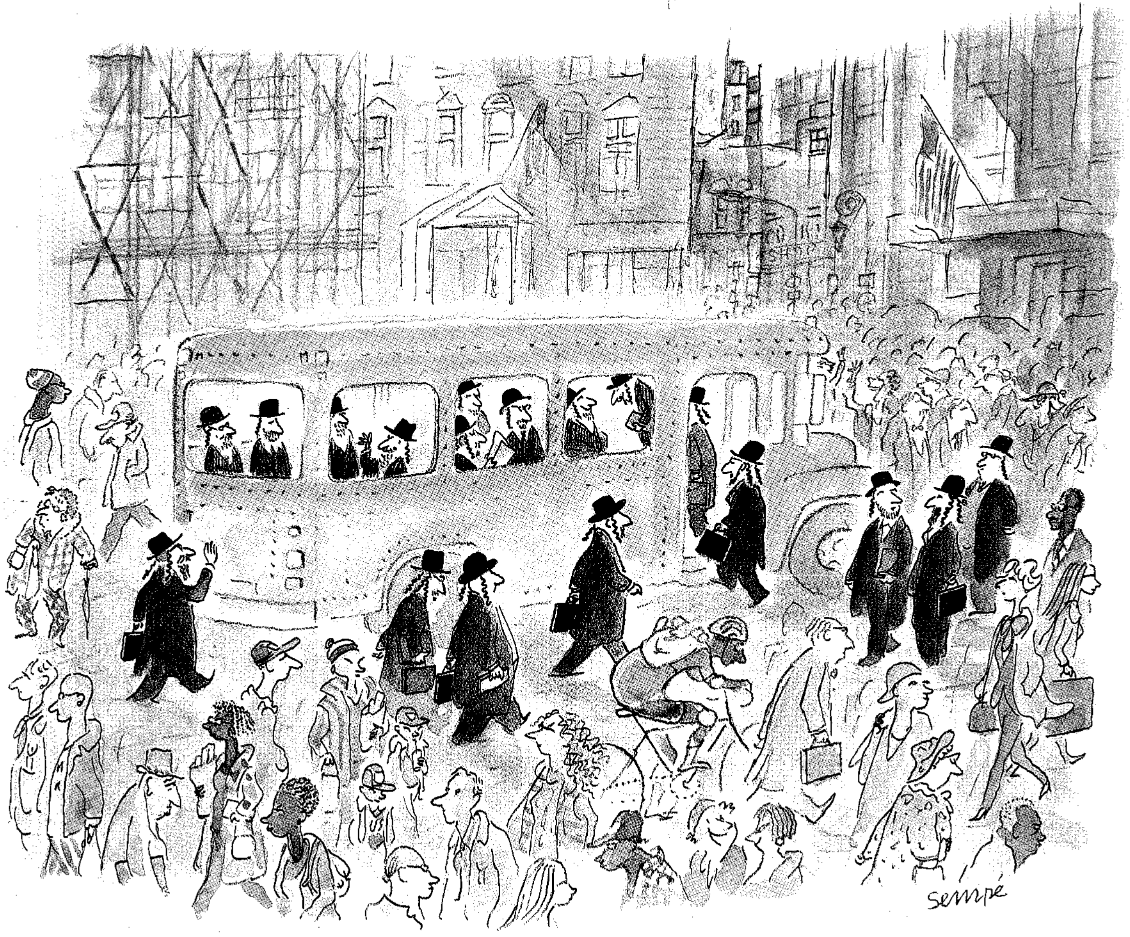
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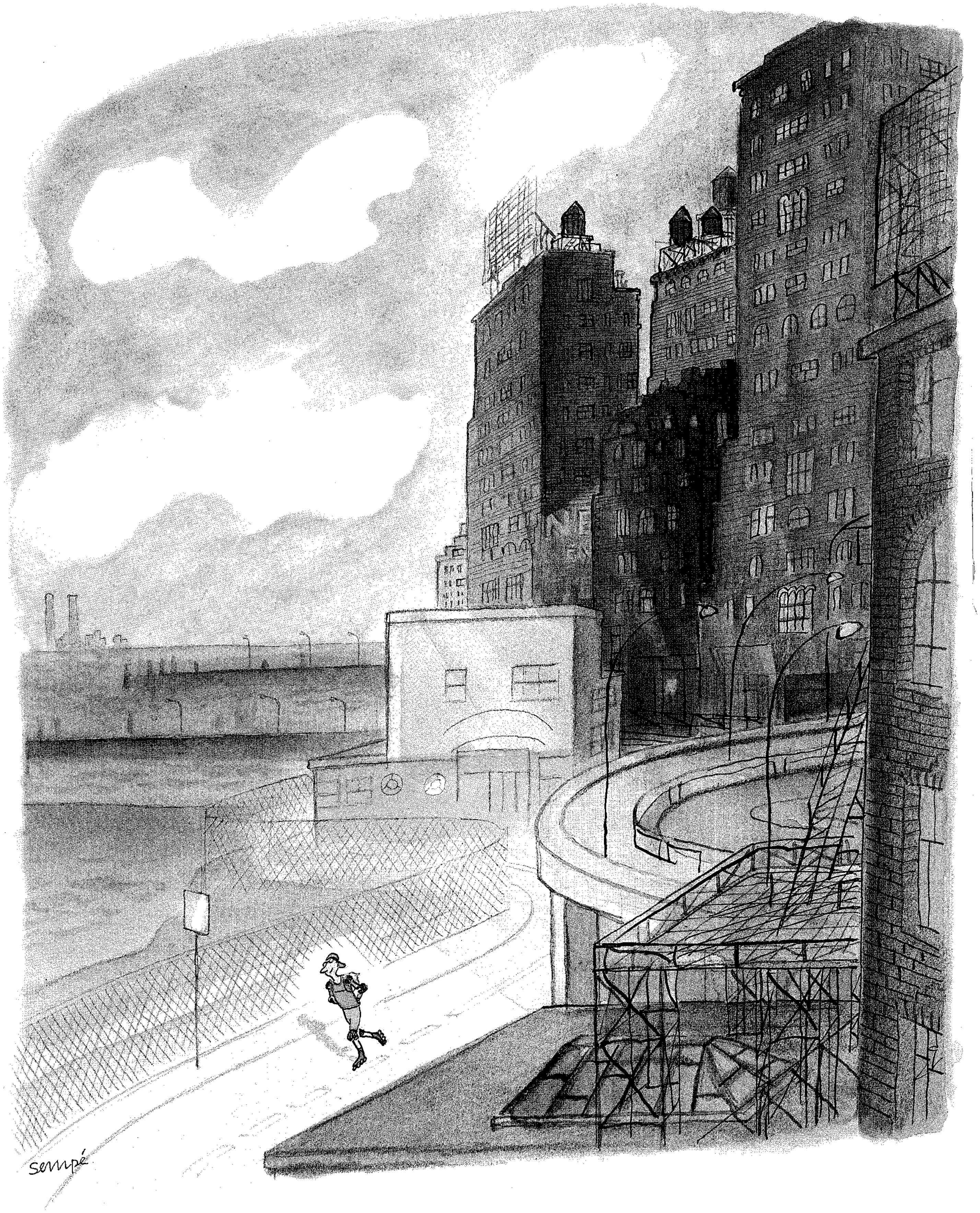

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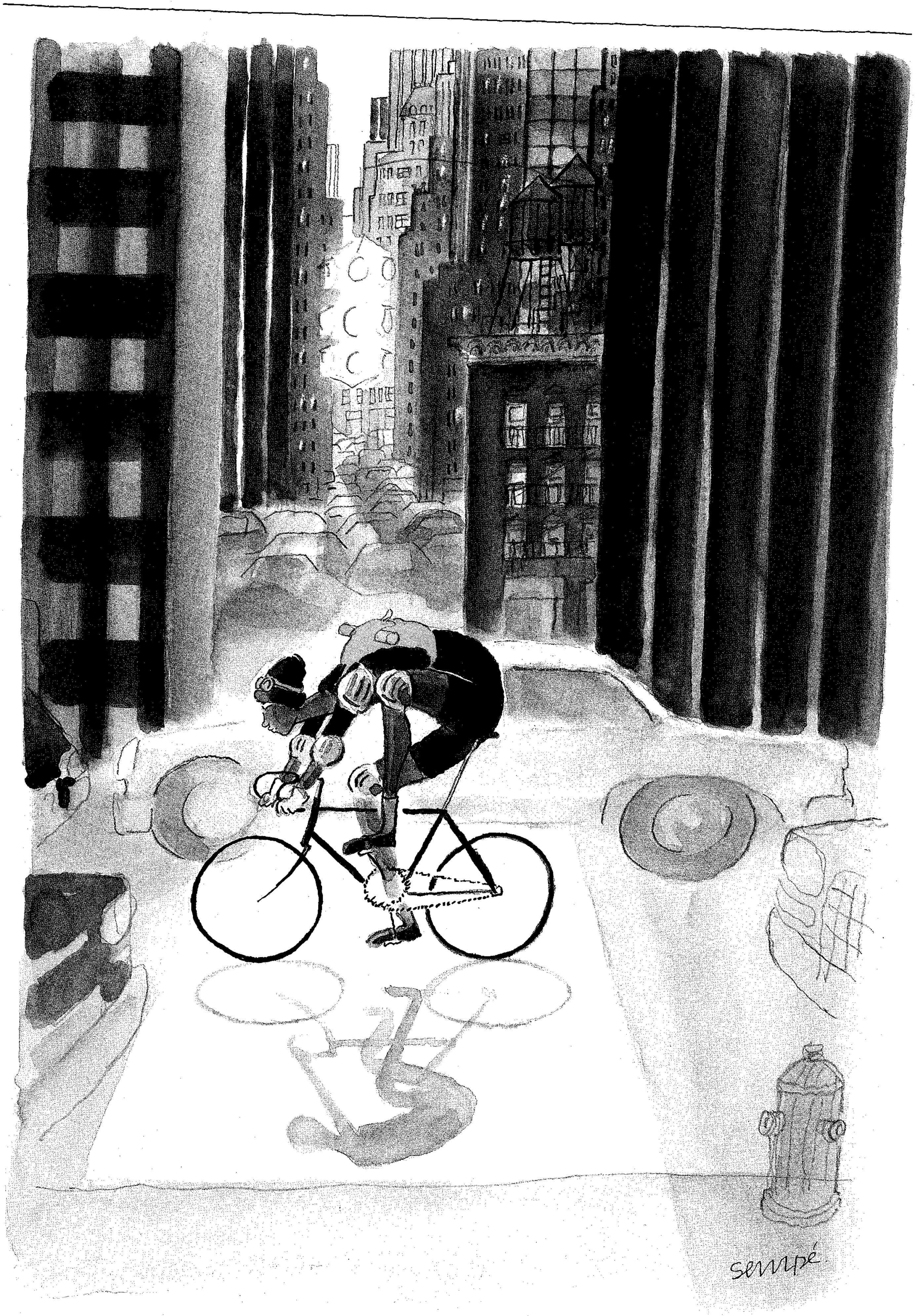

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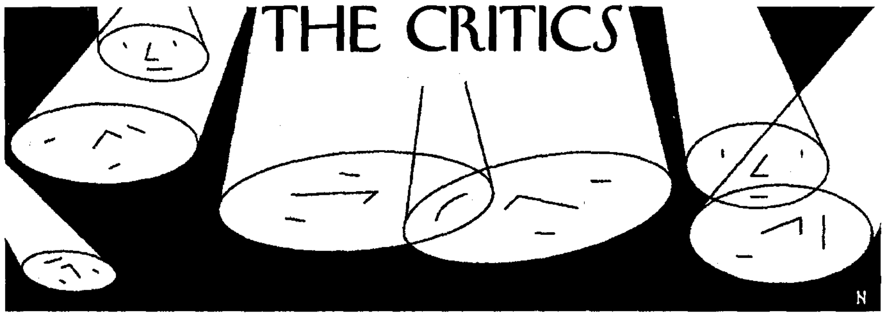


THE SKY LINE

BEAUBOURG GROWS UP

Paris's pop monument has undergone a controversial renovation.

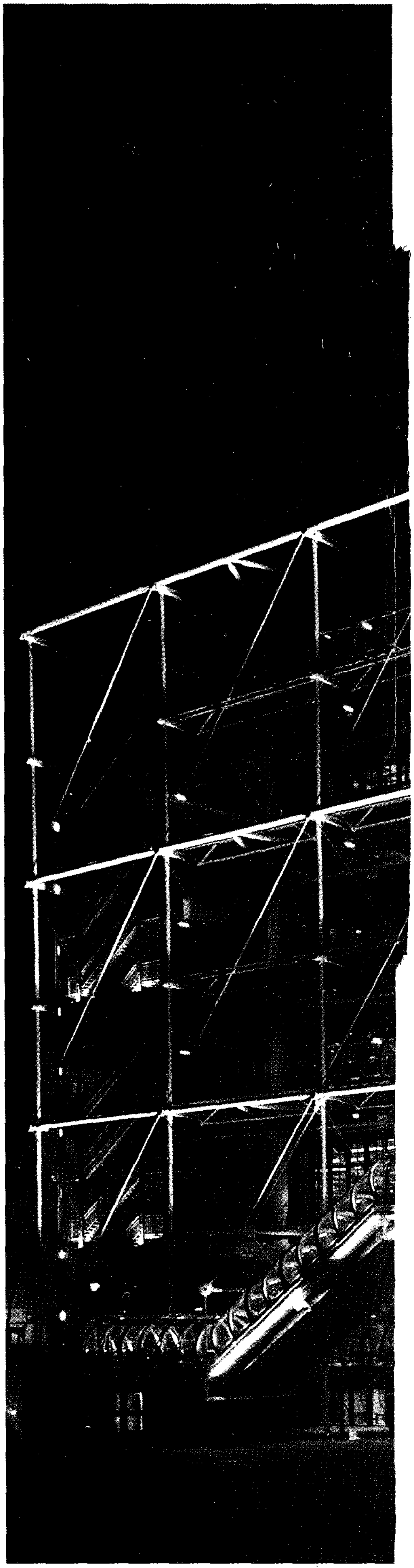
BY PAUL GOLDBERGER

When it was new, the Centre Pompidou—or the Beaubourg, as it is usually called, after its site, the Plateau Beaubourg on the edge of the Marais district in Paris—seemed to be the most modern, not to say the most radical, museum building in the world. Its architects, the Italian Renzo Piano and his English partner, Richard Rogers, had wanted the building to look like a factory. Actually, it looks like a cartoon version of a factory, with enormous, bright-painted pipes and ducts running up and down the exterior. It was designed in a style that was, in the mid-seventies, just beginning to be called high tech, but Piano and Rogers managed to avoid the solemn puritanism that would soon come to characterize architecture of that type. More than anything else, their building seemed like a slap in the face at gentility.

In 1971, when they won an international competition for the commission to design the museum, Piano was thirty-three and Rogers was thirty-seven. "We were terrible boys," Piano said to me recently. "The building was designed by young, insolent people." Influenced by the exuberance and irreverence that characterized the student uprisings in Paris in the late sixties, they felt that the building should symbolize openness and change, and they put huge, unobstructed floors in the interior rather than a series of permanent galleries. Then they put all the structural workings of the building on the outside, as if to say that hiding the truth was to be avoided in architecture, as it should be in politics. They envisioned the Beaubourg as a people's museum that would represent the aspirations of the late twentieth century the way the British Museum had represented the aspirations of the nineteenth.

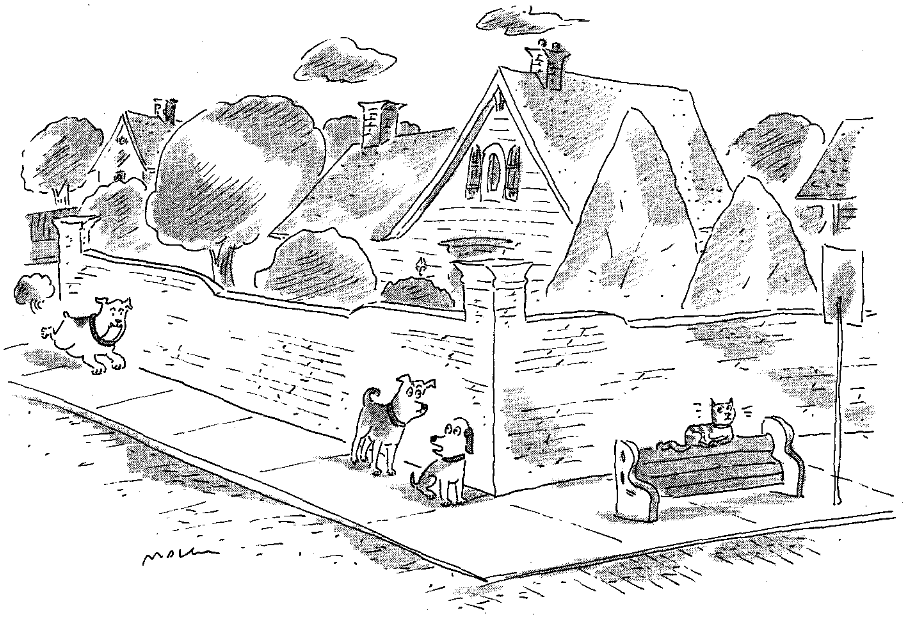
The Beaubourg was a popular success on a scale that far exceeded its architects' intentions. They had planned for about five thousand visitors a day, and more than four times that number came, on average, many of them tourists who took free rides up the glass-enclosed escalator that is attached to the façade and offers a spectacular view of the Paris skyline. The plaza in front of the building became a hangout for jugglers, street musicians, fire eaters, and drug dealers. By the mid-nineties, there had been so much wear and tear on the building that it was looking shabby, and the exterior underwent an elaborate refurbishment. Then the whole building was shut down for more than two years, and the interior was renovated. It reopened in January, and, depending on how you view these things, it is now either a perfect museum for the twenty-first century or a travesty of what it was intended to be. Renzo Piano says that the redesign was simply a response to the need for a building that is "more rational, maybe as a mirror of a more rational culture." Richard Rogers, now Lord Rogers, is less sanguine. He told me he thought that the

PHOTOGRAPH BY ROBERT POLIDORI



The Centre Pompidou, which shocked people w

garish, high-tech design when it opened in the mid-nineteen-seventies, quickly became a beloved relic.



"Let's just sit tight until we get some backup."

building had been "bureaucratized," and that the renovation "undermined the basic principles of the original design."

Piano and Rogers had entered the competition for the commission, which was sponsored by the French government, thinking that they didn't have much of a shot at winning. They doubted that the jury, which included the architects Philip Johnson and Oscar Niemeyer, would be sympathetic to their taste, and they assumed that if, by some miracle, they were selected the government of France would be unwilling to go along with the decision. Piano and Rogers and their collaborators, the most important of whom was the British engineer Peter Rice, of Ove Arup & Partners, put together the kind of plan that is submitted by young architects who feel they have nothing to lose. No one was more startled than they were when the jury gave their design the only prize among six hundred and eighty-one entries, and President Georges Pompidou, who had initiated the project, ordered it built. It was as if the Metropolitan Museum of Art needed a new wing and asked a couple of young architects at Columbia who dabbled in radical ideas to design it.

Pompidou died during the construction of the center, and it became a memorial to him. It also became something of a watershed in museum building. The Beaubourg, more than any building since Frank Lloyd Wright's Guggenheim, made architecture the focal point of museum design, and shifted the priorities of the contemporary museum from connoisseurship to public entertainment. But the Beaubourg pretty quickly looked neither radical nor sophisticated. Throughout the nineteen-eighties and nineties, new museums were built in other cities that, if not equal to the Beaubourg in sheer, dazzling energy, possessed a degree of finesse that was lacking in Paris. When you compare the Beaubourg with buildings like Renzo Piano's Menil Collection in Houston, Richard Meier's Getty in Los Angeles, or Frank Gehry's Guggenheim in Bilbao, it seems like an overeager adolescent. By the late nineties, the place had settled into a kind of arrested development, its brashness no longer exciting, its frame tired and faded. The fact that it needed a paint job didn't help. It is something of a paradox that in order to look good the rough-and-tumble structure has to be kept in as pristine a condition as a building by Mies van der Rohe. But the real problem was that the very concept of its design, which depended on a certain degree of shock, had come to seem as comfortable as an old shoe. In twenty years, the Beaubourg had become a relic.

That it was the most endearing contemporary relic in Paris—the only large-scale structure built in the city in the last quarter-century that was not only admired but loved—wasn't enough to justify leaving it alone, in the view of the bureaucrats who manage it. For one thing, the principal mission of the building has always been to house the Musée National d'Art Moderne and a public research library, and although for a few years the building's success inspired a resurgence of Paris as a venue for contemporary art, the open floors of the Beaubourg were graceless and awkward and didn't provide a sympathetic environment for art works. There wasn't enough wall space to exhibit much of the museum's collection, and the research library wasn't well laid out. The place was most successful as a magnet for tourists. "There were people who didn't even know there was a museum here," says Werner Spies, the director of the Musée National d'Art Moderne.

Spies and his colleagues, including Jean-Jacques Aillagon, the president of the center, tried to respect the original architecture of the building during the long reconstruction period. They started with the paint job, which made the place look as crisp and as fresh as it had in the nineteen-seventies. And they asked Piano and Rogers, who have practiced separately since 1977, though they remain close friends, to oversee an internal reorganization of the building which would expand the galleries by fifty per cent, relocate and update the library, move the administrative offices outside the building, and change the public space in the main entry hall at the ground level. The famous outside escalator was redesigned so that it is accessible only to people who have bought tickets to the museum. The library now has its own entrance, off the main lobby. The open spaces for showing art were replaced with a series of small white galleries designed by the French architect Jean-François Bodin. The new galleries are closed, rigid, formal. They are also dull, which is the one thing the original Beaubourg never was. The entry hall now has signs with lists of corporate sponsors, led by Yves

Saint Laurent, lest anyone doubt that the days when the French government paid all the bills are over.

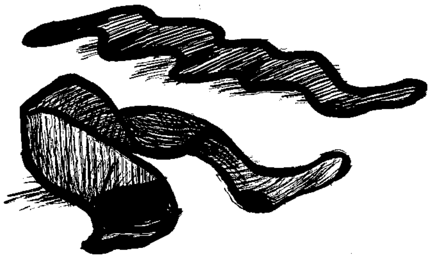
Rogers so hated the way the building was being changed that he walked off the job midway during the design process, leaving it to his former partner. Rogers is not known for holding his tongue when he thinks that his social conscience is being compromised—he was the only prominent architect in Britain to speak out against Prince Charles when the Prince was making a career of bashing modern architecture—and he felt that the renovation destroyed the very essence of the building he and Piano had designed. "The museum was never supposed to be a traditional museum—everything was supposed to be on the outside to give you those great football fields of space to allow total flexibility," he said to me. "In the original concept, there was no real differentiation between the library and the museum. It was a cultural center, and now it is a set of departments." Renzo Piano is more philosophical. "Architecture is a bouillabaisse," he says. "We wanted a flexible building, and we have to accept it. I am unhappy about making people pay to go up the escalator, but these are inevitable things."

Being "flexible" enough to accommodate the needs of the institution meant relinquishing the kind of "total flexibility" of layout that Rogers was talking about. Of course, that kind of flexibility is often antithetical to the display of art. If being able to shift partitions at will were all that mattered, then paintings would look better at the Javits Center than at the Met. But there is something of a conundrum in Piano's attempt to justify the changes at the Beaubourg as being in the spirit of the architects' original idea of openness to change, since these particular changes have created an interior space that is firmly fixed in a conventional mode. The renovated building is a triumph for those who believe that art should be shown in neutral settings, which is not what Piano and Rogers had in mind.

The Beaubourg isn't suitable for a permanent installation of art under any circumstances; it is too big, too sprawling, too full of its own energy. Unfortunately, the small-to-medium-sized works of modern art which are in the museum's collection look best in the kind of scaled-down galleries that obscure the building. Although there are a couple of exceptions in the renovated space—like the windows at the end of the hopelessly long central spine of rooms, where there are open views of the city—most of the new galleries seem to overpower Rogers and Piano's original architecture and, at the same time, to appear weak and trite inside it. The escalator ride up the exterior is as glorious as ever—nowhere else does a panoramic view of the roofscapes of Paris reveal itself at such elegant, measured speed—but when you get to the fourth and fifth floors, where the permanent collection is housed, you feel as though you had stumbled onto a Hollywood soundstage on which someone has constructed a set for a movie about the Museum of Modern Art.

The Beaubourg was intended to provide a circus tent for culture; it was not to be just a *Kunsthalle*. I think that Piano and Rogers were more prescient in their design than even they knew. The Beaubourg has always seemed suitable for a time when art would be less fixed than it was in the early seventies—for a time when media and entertainment and technology and art blurred together. This is a building that predates the computer revolution, and yet it positively shouts New Media. It would have been wonderful to see what architects like Liz Diller and Ric Scofidio, the gifted New York-based designers who specialize in using new media as the inspiration for architectural form, could have done with the assignment of updating the Beaubourg.

It isn't Piano's fault that the building has been eased into the role of a temple of culture. After Rogers left, Piano seems to have stayed around largely to prevent the building from being compromised still further, and his sensibility, which I would describe as a benign and tolerant humanism married to exquisite aesthetic judgment, has surely given the renovation project what conscience it has. The building was extraordinarily difficult to change, in fact, because its fundamental nature is embodied in its brashness. Beaubourg may be the only celebrated monumental work of architecture in which youthful innocence could almost be said to have been the controlling architectural idea. "We didn't know when we won the competition what the culture was," Piano said to me. "At that age, we wanted to make a joke. At that age, you don't really know, so we said this is like a factory, come and enjoy. . . . We had an innocence, an innocent energy."



Most monumental buildings, whatever their architectural style, are grounded in adult authority. The Invalides and the Louvre, for instance, project propriety, formality, and the sense that there is a set of rules that public buildings follow. The Beaubourg was designed to thumb its nose at authority. It is a very beautiful and exciting building, but it was conceived almost as a piece of adolescent rowdiness, and from the beginning this presented a problem. If the Beaubourg was so likable that everyone, even the government, could fall in love with it, then it wasn't much of a threat to authority after all.

Rogers was more attached to the vaguely socialist leanings of the original design—right this way to the escalator, free views on top of the cultural circus for all—which is why he has been more bothered than Piano about the building's reconstruction. He has had a harder time giving up on the youthful irreverence and subversive intentions of the original design. But how can adolescence be sustained for more than a generation? That is one of the paradoxes the Beaubourg presents, and maybe there is no real solution. To turn the Beaubourg into a grownup museum, as has just been done, violates the basic nature of its design. On the other hand, that design, at least on the inside, never worked very well, and there was little practical justification for retaining it. To have done so would have been merely sentimental, and would have required us to believe that the earnest innocence out of which this building was born meant something still. ♦

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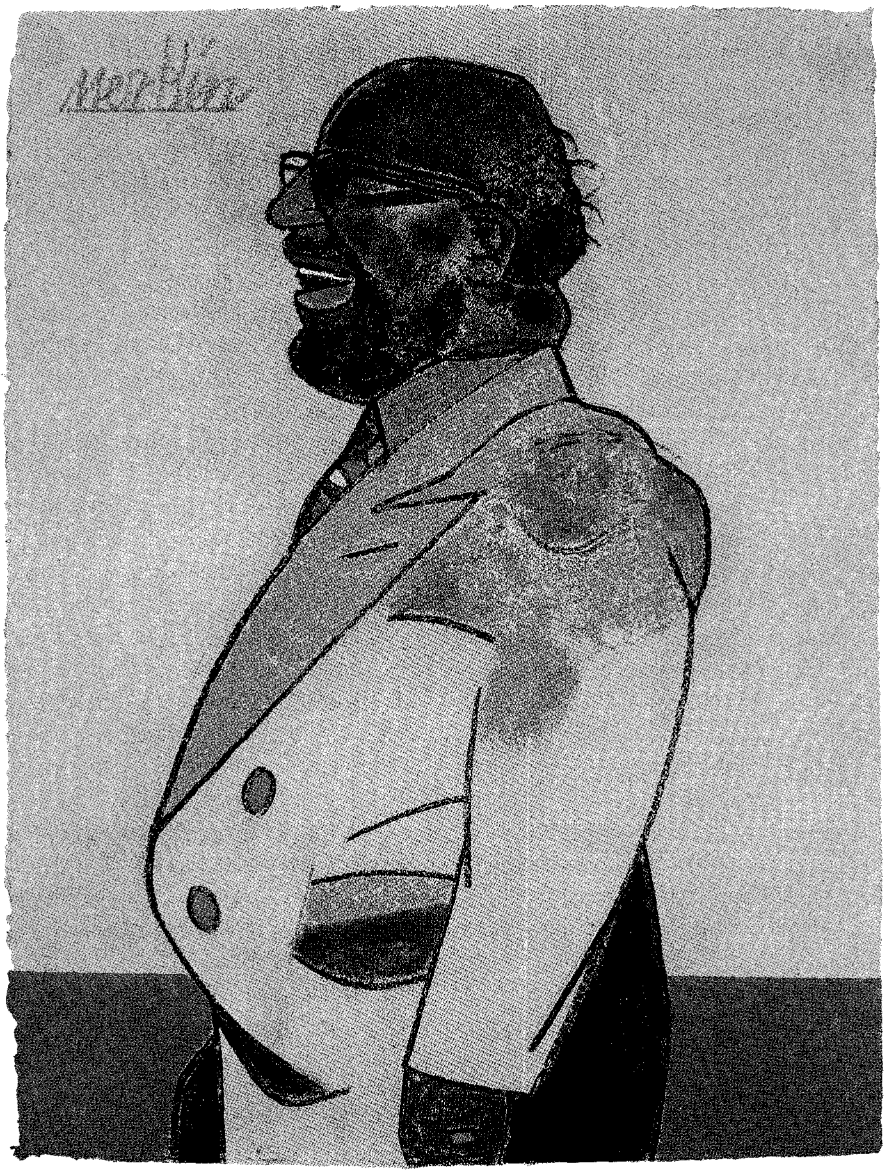
COMING HOME

A new novel about black and white in America.

BY JOHN UPDIKE



Stanley Crouch preaches against tribalisms that divide us one from another.

RICHARD MERKIN

In Stanley Crouch's ambitious first novel, "Don't the Moon Look Lonesome: A Novel in Blues and Swing" (Pantheon; $26.95), the heroine, a white jazz singer from South Dakota named Carla Hamsun, loves Maxwell Davis, a black tenor saxophonist from Texas. For five hundred and thirty pages, she keeps on loving him through a hurricane of talk, much of it in italic flashback. This is a big jam session of a novel, in which every character stands up and blows, and if some of the riffs remind us of Stanley Crouch's essays, well, welcome to his particular universe. The over-all topic is black and white in America, and the issue is, Can a nice black-white couple, sharing venturesome, industrious temperaments, an interest in jazz, and errant sisters, form a more perfect union in an environment not infrequently hostile from both directions? Black women sashay up to Maxwell and say things like "You brothers need to come home," and it's getting to him, Carla senses. A visit to his old home in Houston is reassuring—his parents both take to her—and fills the first half of the book, but the next half returns the duo to New York City, whence Maxwell hits the road and where rueful Carla puts in one of the longest days in literature since Leopold Bloom perambulated Dublin on June 16, 1904.

What makes the days and the pages go by slowly is their irrepressible burden of what Crouch himself labels "blah-blah" and "Jabberwocky." The lead offender, among many logorrheic candidates, is Leeann, a tall black model from South Carolina whose "very swanky" life of first-class jet tickets and limos with one-way windows has not dulled her gift for such "blow-torch humor" as:

> I feel a grass hut over my head this evening. I hear me some drums. I'm getting ancestral. I feel the slave ship swaying across the mighty Atlantic Ocean. Seem just like yesterday. I feel the cries of the crammed and the damned. I smell the toe jam. I'm all the way back to the bushwack. I feel a cotton sack on my tired black back. I'm feeling a feeling this evening. I'm talking about Daddy. Papa De-Dada. Dada. Dahomey. Home, down home with my homeys is what I'm talking about.

Or, in a less epic mood:

> All right. Here's the niggergram delivered right to your door, Mr. Bandstand Caliban. About all this black studies, or coon studies or whatever the fuck they are, you must lift every voice, Maxwell, my brother. You got to get the dickhead niggers in charge to tell the kids the white man don't want you to know about this.

Not that Maxwell is among the tongue-tied; he can expatiate by the paragraph on topics as diverse as New York City weather and the racial politics of Sylvester Stallone's "Rocky" movies. Carla laps up his japes—"*Mighty white of you, he joked, and she smiled, her entire personality caught up in that curve of lips and teeth*"—perhaps because they remind her of her father, a history teacher who was "always trying to frame the world he was in" with strenuous soliloquies. In his own tireless voice Crouch writes a loosely buttoned and highly figurative English that is meant, I think, to remind us of the unwindings of jazz and the blues:

> When she was with Bobo, his unapologetic tenderness had the power to reduce every last bit of her to a translucent sigh and a startling, reluctant squeal, something like an anger at the fact of loneliness itself, a rage that spanked the flank of her orgasm as it ran free.
>
> There was more to Maxwell's mom than the Negro earth mother white women like herself were so frequently seeking to complement their own mothers, to provide folk insights, humor, and tales of bewildering disasters limited in their effect by an immutable stoicism rinsed in the blues and shaped up as the gospel bird of rhythm that rose up from the frying pan of hard times and flapped heavenward, headless and featherless but dripping buckets of greasy soul.

On the other hand, Carla's white-racist sister, Ramona, is "hugging the thorn bush of the past so that the pain stayed alive." Yearning has "unsullied" Carla's soul "and was right inside the pocket of the groove you were always after on the bandstand." Contemplation of Carla's insides turns the prose semi-liquid: we read of "every drop of the swampy goo inside her own soul," and of the way her "heart became the twin of a hot fudge brownie fresh from the oven when Maxwell nodded at Dad." How can you not go soft on a man whose "face took on a stonewall assurance mooshed up with humor and erotic underplay"?

What is Crouch's preachment in this mooshy romance? A cultivated, jazz-crazy man of color, he is against tribalisms that would divide Americans one from another, and black from white especially. Not all the diatribes his characters deliver can be taken as his own point of view, but among the targets vigorously attacked are black studies, separate black tables and dormitories, and social pressures that would discourage men and women of unlike color from falling in love. He is an integrationist, as indicated by his dedication of this novel to Albert Murray, Ralph Ellison, and Saul Bellow—"mentors all." He (through Maxwell) expresses distaste for popular black music today—"gangster rappers," purveying "anger and disruption . . . not to mention the exceedingly low level of the musicianship"—and (through Carla) wonders "How long, oh, Lord, how long . . . would it be before Americans and Europeans and everybody else who became civilized under-

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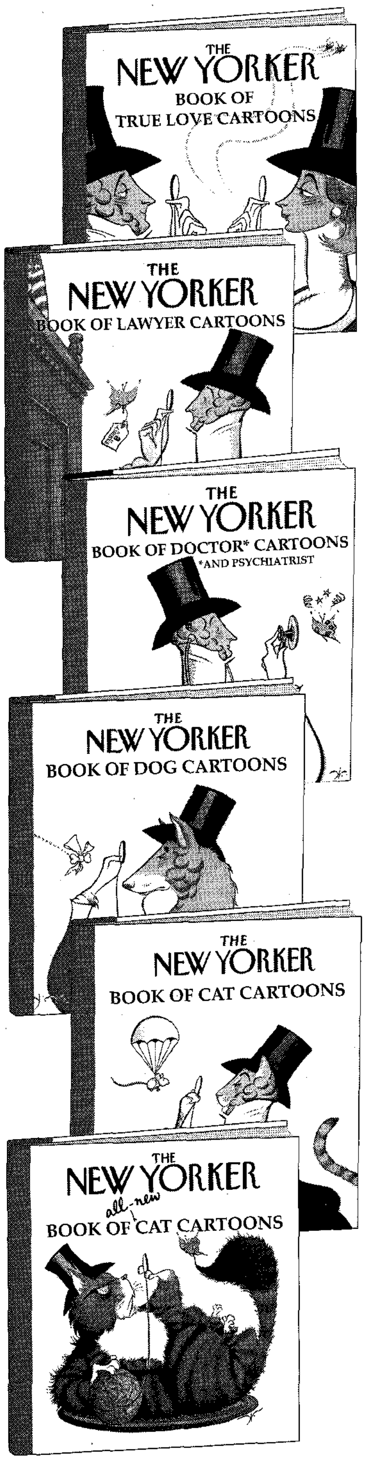

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CROWN

Too much rain
loosens trees.
In the hills giant oaks
fall upon their knees.
You can touch parts
you have no right to—
places only birds
should fly to.

—*Kay Ryan*

stood that continually vitalizing the middle class was the issue, not hiding in costumes and bad behavior?" The Houston section makes real, in its portrait of middle-class black life, what the white bourgeois novel has lost: the sense of hazard from underneath, from the greedy agents of degradation, and the triumph of will and endeavor that decent respectability represents. In the novel's longest set piece, thirty-five pages are devoted to a church service, every word of the prayers and sermon, with a bona-fide resurrection from the dead thrown in for good measure.

Crouch's case for miscegenation would be stronger if Carla did not appear to be a black in whiteface. The author does well enough with her Dakota prairie, her girlhood on ice and in snow, her cheerleading, class-beauty days, and her good-natured Lutheran parents, but when Maxwell and Crouch draw close to Carla her salient and most appreciated feature is her steatopygous bottom. It is the first thing we learn about her:

> The slippery nature of life had landed her on the abundant curve of buttocks that made this white woman . . . an anatomical anomaly. . . . Maxwell used to nickname her "Tailback" or "Back in Action" or "Black Bottom" or phone her from the road and ask, "How are those Viking grandes dames doing?" . . . An older drummer friend of his . . . said to Maxwell . . . "Boy, now ain't you a bitch? You got a blonde with a black ass."

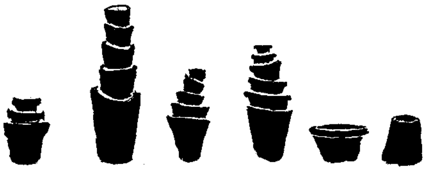
She has a long neck, too, another African beauty mark, and her great achievement, after tutorship by a trio of black-musician lovers, is to sing on the same wavelength as Billie Holiday and Dinah Washington. We can only wish Maxwell joy of his "two-apple-assed" "Viking Hottentot," but as, in the New York section, one long scene of black palaver—diatribal, expository, campy—follows another Carla has little to do but listen. The discussants fitfully remind themselves that she is white—the meek lone white in the room—but when the reader tries to picture her it is hard to come up with anyone paler than Lena Horne or Dorothy Dandridge.

Since Maxwell and Carla are warriors in a cause that Crouch believes in, they have a muralistic largeness, an idealized perfection that excludes the fallibility which generates suspense in both real and fictional narratives. Their musicianship must be consummate, "releasing their personalities through the order and shape of musical logic," and receives the benefit of Crouch's passionate expertise—every song in the sets Carla sings is named, and we hear "how using triplet eighths and other subdivisions *within* quarter-note triplets allowed her to swing completely different kinds of rhythms while *right inside* four/four." Not only does she sing great; she beats a bunch of rich white guys at poker and, but for a high-school accident, might have skated in the Olympics. Her love for her man, likewise, has no flaw, nor his for her, but for the intruding sour note of segregationist politics. So the novel becomes less an action than a disquisition, a wordy, wide-ranging array of voiced opinions, to which we settle like bleary customers in a late-night jazz club: the musicians are playing for themselves on the stand, there is a lot of excited, apparently hilarious talk at the surrounding tables, it is past time to go to bed, but, baby, it's cold outside, and a stupefied kind of happiness comes with just being here. ♦

BRIEFLY NOTED

MotherKind, *by Jayne Anne Phillips (Knopf; $24).* Over the course of a year, Kate, a resolutely independent poet and editor, becomes enmeshed in domesticity: she has a baby, acquires two stepchildren, and discovers that her mother is dying of cancer. Kate has always resisted her mother's desire to care for others perfectly, but she's now preoccupied with making crisp French fries, turning down beds, ironing out problems; frequently overwhelmed, she must also rely on nurses and efficient neighbors. Phillips, an abundantly talented writer, never lapses into sentimentality while describing this woman, whose "interior world had receded, replaced by other lives and their attendant mysteries."

American Pharaoh, *by Adam Cohen and Elizabeth Taylor (Little, Brown; $26.95).* Until now, the definitive chronicle of Mayor Richard J. Daley's two-decade reign over Chicago has been Mike Royko's "Boss," published in 1970, when Daley was still very much in power. The intervening years have permitted the authors of this hefty new biography a cooler perspective. Cohen and Taylor hit all the high points—Daley's youth in the crucible of the South Side's Irish wards, his determination to build up Chicago's downtown, his role in securing (or stealing) the 1960 Presidency for Kennedy—while also sketching a compelling social history of mid-century Chicago, paying special attention to the workings of the machine and the relentless push toward racial segregation. The book ends abruptly with Daley's funeral, in 1976; his legacy (which continued on through Jane Byrne, Harold Washington, and his son Richard M. Daley) is hardly even mentioned. The odd effect of this truncation is to undermine the book's balanced analysis with a final, grand claim: it is as if there were no Chicago before Daley and no Chicago after him.



Africa in My Blood, *by Jane Goodall, edited by Dale Peterson (Houghton Mifflin; $28).* This enchanting selection of Goodall's early letters shows how the dauntless field naturalist came to her career almost by chance: while visiting a school friend in Kenya, in 1957, Goodall met the anthropologist Louis Leakey, who decided she would make an excellent primate researcher and wangled her a grant to observe chimpanzees on a remote reserve. No hardship deters her; she achieves intimacy with her wild troop and gossips about them with no-nonsense tenderness. By the book's close, in 1966, the thirty-two-year-old Goodall has been recognized as a unique contributor to primatology.

Buddha's Little Finger, *by Victor Pelevin, translated from the Russian by Andrew Bromfield (Viking; $25.95).* Pelevin's is the loudest literary voice to emerge from the din of post-Communist Russia, where he is reviled and revered; in his third novel to appear here, the author returns both sentiments. Shuttling between the battlefields of 1919 and the confines of an insane asylum in today's Moscow, Pelevin conflates past and present to paint a surreal portrait of a New Russia whose depravities are very much grounded in the Old. The book is less sure of itself, however, when turning to metaphysics; long expositions on Buddhism read more like Robert M. Pirsig than Dostoyevsky, and the author's contrarian argument for why Russia should look East for its salvation never quite gels.

Erotikon, *by Susan Mitchell (HarperCollins; $23).* Mitchell's erotomaniacal third book is a roll in the hay with the dictionary. "I cannot keep my hands / off the world and the world / out of my breath," she writes, but there's less of the world here than there was in her last book, "Rapture," and more of the heady fumes of language. Striking passages mingle with "sock it to me" riffs, but a couple of poems, like "Girl Tearing Up Her Face," have the divine spark.

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THE THEATRE

RANTING AND RAVING

Eric Bogosian is at it again.

BY NANCY FRANKLIN

Eric Bogosian's new solo performance at the Jane Street Theatre—his first in six years—has a great title: "Wake Up and Smell the Coffee." What we really mean when we use this expression is that we want people to wake up and smell *our* coffee, *our* reality. It's a way of dispensing hostility disguised as straight talk and good advice, and it's the perfect title for a Bogosian show. His characters are always in a rage, and they have endless ways of justifying their own versions of reality. They're armchair terrorists, randomly tossing psychological grenades—which sometimes blow up in their own faces. Take, for instance, the guy from "Wake Up and Smell the Coffee" who complains to his therapist that his ex-wife blames him for their breakup. The way he sees it, it's her fault for not stopping him from staying out drinking and wrecking the car and getting arrested. He says, "I'd be in the kitchen, 7 A.M., puking my brains out, and she'd be giving the kids breakfast like it was nothing. Did she ever stop to think, Poor guy. Why is he doing this to himself? How can I help him? No, she was too self-obsessed to see it. So whose fault was that?" But at least he's gained some insight into life, he tells his therapist: "You know, one thing I've learned here is that in every couple there's two people, the level-headed one and the freak." Short pause. "And we both know which one I am."

"Wake Up and Smell the Coffee" is sometimes very funny, but the tone and the attitude—and the material—aren't all that different from what we get on "Saturday Night Live" or from the mills of standup comedy. Describing his modus operandi in the introduction to the published version of his 1990 "Sex, Drugs, Rock & Roll," Bogosian said, "I take a good look at myself by grabbing the disturbing traits and personifying them in a character. . . . Then I slam one character up against the next and hope that some kind of meditation will evolve. Provocation in the guise of a good time." In his new show, there isn't a lot of slamming going on, or even very much provocation. Bogosian has been doing his one-man shows for some twenty years now, and his characters don't seem as extreme as they once did. Schmoes who fantasize about being rich and famous ("People will line up just to talk to me, even my parents!"), jerks who hit the roof when first class is full and they have to fly coach, Hollywood executives with bloated egos and skewed values: we've seen and read so many depictions of these types that they seem emptied of dramatic possibility. Now in his late forties, Bogosian still looks young and lean in black jeans and a white shirt, and his eye is as sharp as ever. What he sees, he sees clearly—he just doesn't seem to see as much as he used to. It's not Bogosian's fault that human nature hasn't changed appreciably since he started out—we're the same chain of fools, it's just a longer chain—but the world has changed some, and there have been shifts in the way people live, and in the terms they use to explain themselves to themselves, and Bogosian comes across as being a little out of it in this regard.

Bogosian's characters are armchair terrorists, randomly tossing psychological grenades.

EDEL RODRIGUEZ

Spending an evening with someone whose work has thematic continuity and whose entire life isn't devoted to "keeping up with what's going on" can have its refreshing aspects, of course, but in "Wake Up and Smell the Coffee" Bogosian appears, at times, to be borrowing from his earlier work rather than continuing it. In one scene, he plays "Eric Bogosian" at an audition and then riffs on what success would mean to him. It's almost identical to a scene from

"Sex, Drugs, Rock & Roll," down to the references to stretch limos, the fantasies about lording fame and money over "losers," and the bits about the entertainment value of the horrors of TV news. And I would say that the show is a little heavy on latte-based humor, which has long since run its course as a supposedly stinging metaphor for the consumerist, conformist American way of life.

Both Bogosian and the show's director, Jo Bonney (who has staged three of Bogosian's previous performances and is also married to him), have said in interviews that "Wake Up and Smell the Coffee" is "more stream of consciousness" than his earlier pieces, and there are some recurring elements in the show that work to good effect. Bogosian greets the audience with some blather about how we're going to go on a journey together, "and so, hopefully, if my humble little show touches you in any way, if I do reach out and communicate to just a few of you, you might walk out of this theatre a slightly different person." It doesn't take long for him to shed this skin, though, and soon he's taunting the audience instead: "I don't have any answers. I don't have a 'message.' I can't make you *think*. I can only make you *numb*, sedate you. Make painless this unending trail of shit we call a life. This tar pit of stupidity, this vat of spiritual oatmeal, this slimy snail track of frustration." Then, toward the end of the show, when "Eric Bogosian" is in a movie meeting, an unctuous producer says to him, "You know, my wife took me to see one of your shows. And it was very, very interesting. Compelling. Really made me think." It's a great bit, and it reminds us, if we need reminding, that we're all capable of sounding fatuous without knowing it. Bogosian is still very good at what he does, and what he does is still worth doing, but in too much of this show the coffee he's serving tastes reheated.

This season brings a revival of two major musicals from 1957: "West Side Story," in the form of a Gap ad now on TV, construction-site scaffolding, and buses; and "The Music Man," at the Neil Simon, under the direction of Susan Stroman, who also did the choreography. The first thing that needs to be said about this production is that it has magnificently solved the Robert Preston Problem (which is identical to the Yul Brynner Problem) in the person of Craig Bierko, a movie actor who is making his Broadway début in the role of Professor Harold Hill—the character that Preston, of course, immortalized in the original show and in the 1962 movie. Bierko is a tall, strapping fellow in his mid-thirties, and he moves and sings and talks with great confidence and charm (and speed, when he has to, which is often—he is, after all, playing a fast talker). He has weight and presence, like the male musical stars of several decades ago—and that, as much as his looks, gives him tremendous sex appeal. He and Rebecca Luker, as Marion, the librarian, make a lovely couple, and Luker's voice is sweet and warbly, just right for the era of parlor songs, in which this musical is set. Except for two of the younger people in the show (I'll just say that one of them is shrill, and the other, whose toothy grimace of a smile is a public nuisance, dances as though adrenaline were his only muse), the cast is wonderful, with a character-actor star turn from Ruth Williamson as the wife of the mayor of River City.

"The Music Man" hits us with the simplicity of the fairy tale that it is, but achieving that simplicity is quite a feat. If the show is of a piece, it's partly because one person, Meredith Willson, wrote the music, the lyrics, and the book, and partly because Willson really got at something. In its story and in its music—the two aren't actually separable—and in its movement and its rhythms, "The Music Man" expresses how powerful music is, how deep its pleasures go, and how it can, indeed, transform us. It puts music in its place—right up there with all the other miracles of life. ♦

From an E-mail received by staff members of the University of Delaware.

"So, You Have High Cholesterol. . . Now What?" is a cholesterol education program that will be held on Wednesday, March 15th from 12–1 p.m. in 303 Gore Hall. Learn how nutrition and exercise affect your cholesterol levels and how to reduce your risk of heart disease. Cost: 10 wellness dollars. Attendees will be entered into a drawing for a Bennigan's dinner for 2 gift certificate.

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THE CURRENT CINEMA

COOKIE MONSTERS

Travolta makes war, and Woody Allen bakes a treat.

BY ANTHONY LANE

Here's a thought. "Taking the very, very sane person in present time, one would mark a decline of his sanity by a shift from an interest in present time to an overwhelming interest in the future which would decline into considerable planning for the future in order to avoid bad things happening in it." Those are the words of the late L. Ron Hubbard, the author of more than a dozen books of science fiction. The most famous is "Battlefield Earth," which is set in the year 3000, and which has now been made into a motion picture.

It stars Barry Pepper as Jonnie, one of a band of humans—or "man-animals"—subsisting in the hilly wastes of what was once America. Mankind, we are informed at the beginning, "is an endangered species," and Jonnie risks his neck by venturing into the ruins of a city. I think it is meant to be New York, but, sadly, the standard of special effects in this film is not as high as it might be, and it can be hard to identify precisely where the characters are, or what they are doing there. Anyway, Jonnie is happily feasting on roasted flesh when he is attacked, captured, and transported to a giant greenhouse, where he is forced into slavery by the evil Psychlos from Planet Psychlo. Serves him right for taking so long over lunch.

The Psychlos have a huge hairy dome at the rear of their heads and a mass of dreadlocks at the front. They look like the love children of Bob Marley and Dusty Springfield. We are introduced to their chief of security (John Travolta), and I am embarrassed to admit that I didn't quite catch his name. I think it was Terl, but it could have been Duh or Grrr. One thing is made absolutely clear: there are no Psychlos called Annabel or Violet, just as there are no Psychlos who enjoy being sent to work on Earth—or, as Terl calls it, "this pitiful excuse for a planet."

His next move, which I still can't fathom, is to educate Jonnie in Psychlo language and culture; the poor fellow has to sit in a dentist's chair and have an astral jet of pure wisdom stream directly into his eyes, like someone watching a repeat of "Melrose Place." The plan backfires, because Jonnie is now equipped to kick against the pricks and urge his fellow-animals to arise. Up goes the cry: "We have seven days to take the planet back!" No longer must they fester in cages and dine off cold green porridge! L. Ron Hubbard, who stood for nothing if not freedom, would undoubtedly have thrilled to the sight of them. Tragically, in the words of "Scientology: A New Slant on Life," Hubbard "departed his body on January 24, 1986."

Speaking as one who departed his mind about twenty minutes into "Battlefield Earth," I must confess myself baffled. For a start, the picture is surprisingly violent. I am aware, of course, of L. Ron's warning that "when you start to introduce order into anything, disorder shows up and blows off," but, given the choice, I would have preferred not to see quite so many bodies being smashed with iron tools. The director is Roger Christian, which is a blow to those of us who were praying for the film to be made by someone called Dick Scientologist. I was waiting for a Hubbard-style education in the ways of beingness and Clears. ("The name of a state achieved through auditing. . . The Clear has no engrams which can be re-stimulated to throw out the correctness of compu-

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The New Yorker (ISSN 0028-792X), published weekly (except for six combined issues: Feb. 21 & Feb. 28, Apr. 24 & May 1, June 19 & 26, Aug. 21 & 28, Oct. 16 & 23, Dec. 25 & Jan. 1) by The Condé Nast Publications Inc., 4 Times Square, N.Y., N.Y. 10036. Vol. LXXVI, No. 12, May 22, 2000. Periodical postage paid at New York, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. Authorized as second-class mail by the Post Office Department, Ottawa, Canada, and for payment of postage in cash. Canadian Publication Mail Sales Product Agreement No. 190969. Canadian goods-and-services-tax registration number R123242885. Registered as a newspaper at the British Post Office. Subscription rates: In U.S. and possessions, one year, $49.95. In Canada, one year, $90.00 (includes GST and HST where applicable). In Germany, one year, DM290. Mail orders to: IP Internationale Presse, Distribution & Marketing GmbH, Waldstr. 70, D-63128 Dietzenbach, Germany. Other foreign subscriptions, one year, $112.00, payable in advance.

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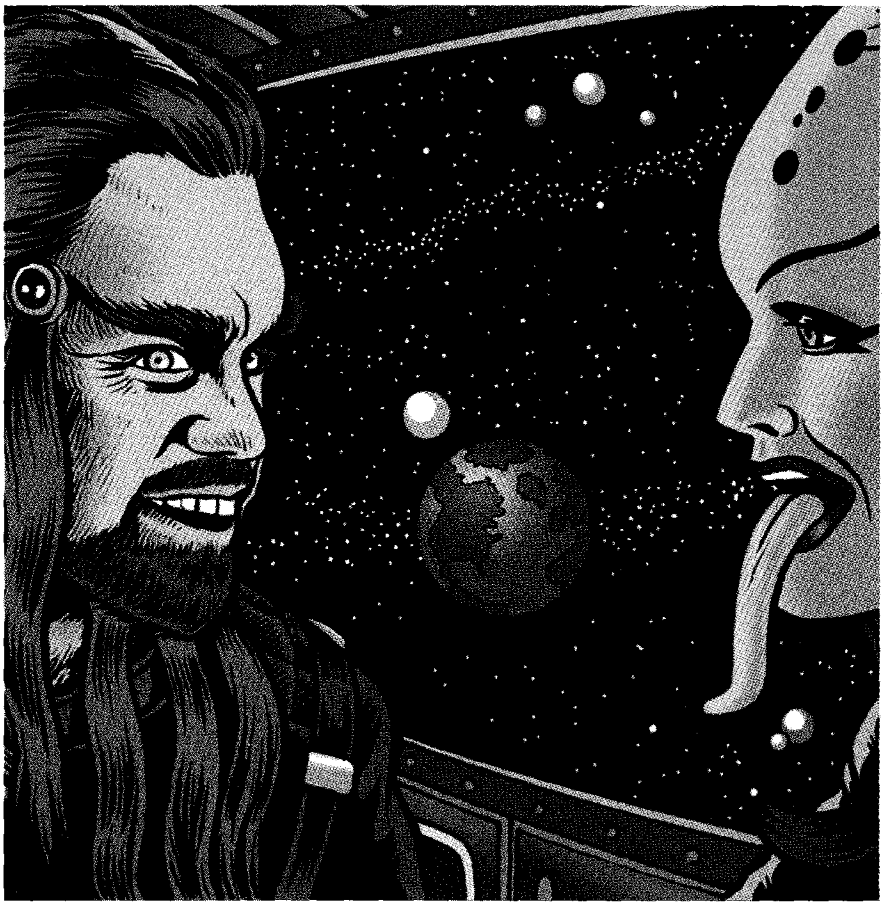
tations.") Far from resorting to what L. Ron rightly censures as "low-toned mockery" ("a little band down very close to death on the Tone Scale"), I was peacefully prepared for my first, stirring encounter with enlightenment. And what did we get? This pitiful excuse for an entertainment: the "Showgirls" of sci-fi.

Travolta, who was also one of the producers of the picture, does his best. He judiciously gives himself the villain's role and makes a concerted, if doomed, effort to instill a dash of camp. There is a love interest, but the squeeze in question succeeds only in getting a big laugh toward the end, when she tells Jonnie, "I always knew this would be your destiny." Given that when she last saw Jonnie he was living in a hut with a mud floor, and that he is currently organizing Harrier jump jets to shoot down alien spacecraft, she is clearly a girl of some imagination. By this time, the movie theatre was resounding to the howls of low-toned mockery and the ominous clap of seats flipping back up, and I began to wonder what the outcome of this project might be. Even though it functions neither as propaganda nor as allegory, the names of Hubbard and Travolta onscreen will insure that people make the connection, and therein lies the problem; the one thing that could dent the armor-plated cause of Scientology is the sound of global derision. Travolta is perhaps the best-known Scientologist alive—a good advertisement for the faith, you might say—but, when Tom Cruise, Nicole Kidman, Mimi Rogers, Kirstie Alley, Isaac Hayes, and all the fellow-faithful troop in to watch this farrago, will they really be convinced that it was such a good idea? "People are the victims of their own flinch," as L. Ron so beautifully put it, and "Battlefield Earth" may be a flinch too far.



John Travolta as the chief of security from Planet Psychlo in "Battlefield Earth."

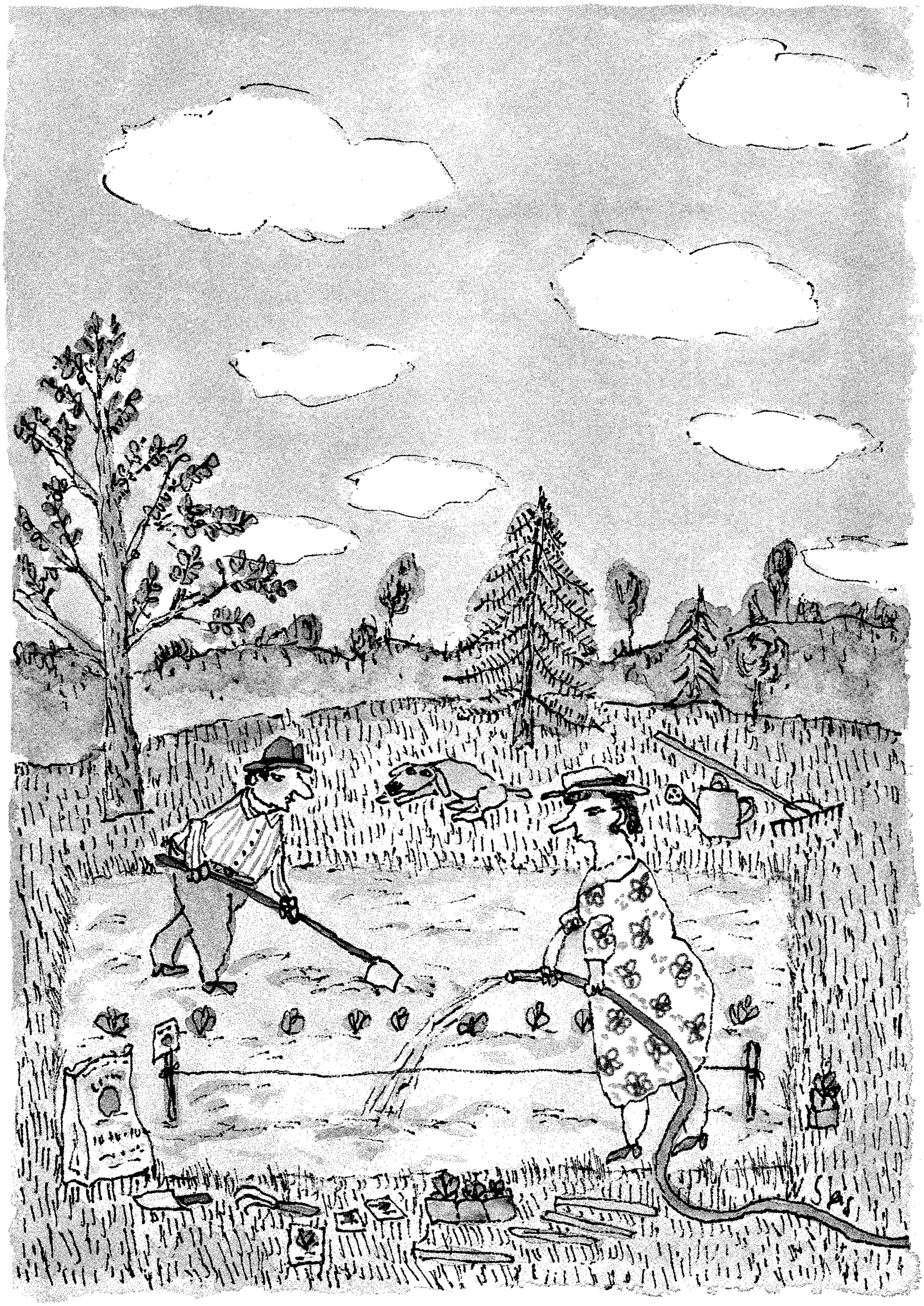
MARK ZINGARELLI

You can always tell when a new Woody Allen film is due, because the milk that you bought when the last Woody Allen film came out is starting to go sour in the fridge. It must be days now—almost whole weeks—since "Sweet and Lowdown" ended its run, and I was getting antsy, so thank goodness for the arrival of "Small Time Crooks." This is late, funny Allen, which is like early, funny Allen, only with a bigger bald spot. He himself plays Ray Winkler, a useless thief who rents a store and gets his wife, Frenchy (Tracey Ullman), a topless dancer turned manicurist, to sell cookies, while he and his friends—played by Michael Rapaport, Tony Darrow, and Jon Lovitz—dig a tunnel from down below into a nearby bank. To call it a foolproof plan would be to insult the world-class collection of fools whom Ray has mustered in that cellar.

The movie takes time to grow, and shrivels a little at the end, but the middle part, with the jokes in high season, is a peach. I would not class this as one of Allen's great moral inquisitions, but the truth that it preaches, though undeniably small-time, is profound: crime doesn't pay, but cookies do, especially if you spray the aroma on with a can. Although the bank heist is a flop, Frenchy's baking is a sellout, and, before you know it, she and Ray are running a franchise and living uptown in moneyed splendor. Ray, magnificent in clothes of such electric blue that you expect his hair to stand on end, shows off his furniture: "It's Louis XIV... Louis XV... top Louis, anyway." The marriage suffers; Ray wants to take the money and run, preferably toward a cheeseburger and tickets for the game, but Frenchy, who pronounces crudités to rhyme with Luddites, wants to buy her way into class. So she hires David (Hugh Grant), who looks as classy as anyone can in a cravat.

You can guess the rest, although you might not guess quite how gracefully, once again, Allen brings his plot full circle. The young Woody would have loved the way in which his older self has kept faith with slapstick (look out for the burst water main), but he could hardly have foreseen the gentle, civilized pessimism of his maturity; things may not turn out for the best in Woody's world, but at least they turn out, and not always for the worst. In fact, "Small Time Crooks" is a triumph for the middle-aged; Elaine May—playing Frenchy's cousin, a woman so dim she exists in a blissful twilight all her own—steals every scene she appears in. It's the only successful robbery in sight. This movie is that rarest of consolations: a wise work about idiots. ♦

THE BACK PAGE BY WILLIAM STEIG



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